



**UNTIL...HAS ARRIVED**  
PAGE 1



**PASTOR SEARCH  
UPDATE**  
PAGE 3



**SUNDAY SCHOOL  
FOR ALL AGES**  
PAGE 4



**STOP HUNGER  
NOW**  
PAGE 6

# UNITED PARISH OF BOWIE

*United in Christ - Our Mission: To Serve*

## UNTIL...has arrived

"How long will you be with us?" This is a question asked by several of you. And my response has been, "Until... until your next pastor is called."

And now, "UNTIL" has arrived. With anticipation and excitement you met the Rev. Christopher K. Deacon and his family prior to his candidacy sermon on Sunday, September 7. Following the service, during a called Congregational Meeting, you received the report of the PNC and unanimously elected him to be the next installed pastor of the United Parish of Bowie. To God be the glory! BEHOLD! God is doing something new! And I am so very excited for you! Yes, a lot of heartfelt exclamation points.

As my time with you is coming to a close, I pray that with God's help my role as an interim has been and is to God's glory and has served its purpose. As you may recall, the role of the interim period is meant to help a congregation look at themselves in a mirror... to ascertain their strengths and weaknesses and to prayerfully consider where God is leading them to make changes. To varying degrees I believe together we have successfully moved through the goals of interim ministry. Goals that include, but are not limited to:

1. Maintaining/renewing the viability of the church
2. Reinforcing the ministry of the laity; identifying new leadership; equipping the saints (you) for ministry; inviting all to share their God-given gifts, abilities, and talents wherever you are and whatever you are doing
3. Clarifying the mission of the church and the ways it serves within the church and stretches itself into the community and beyond
4. Dealing with any special needs of the church
5. Emphasizing fellowship and reconciliation
6. Strengthening denominational ties so as to understand your role in the wider church
7. Rebuilding/strengthening the church's "infrastructure"
8. Exploring ways to strengthen finances and stewardship
9. Identifying/addressing any issues of conflict
10. Resolving feelings of grief and/or anger related to the departure of past pastors; getting closure with previous pastors when the problem lingers on beyond the formal farewell; moving beyond saying who did what in the past
11. Implementing ways to enhance communication

The time of interim ministry is meant to provide both the time and the focus by which a congregation can strengthen its ministries, rediscover and renew its goals and resources, and prepare positively for a new pastor. I thank you for inviting me to walk this phase of the journey with you!

I thank you, the members and friends of the United Parish of Bowie for the love,

continued on page 2

kindness, and support you have shown me these past 33 months. I greatly appreciate the way the Board has worked together doing the worshipful work of the church, for their leadership, for developing policies and procedures, for their insights and ability to work through difficult situations.

I am grateful to the Committee Chairs for their openness and willingness to explore new ways and new ideas; for the decisions to let a ministry go so another ministry could be cultivated and bloom and blossom, for their faithfulness in carrying out their responsibilities as a Chair and equipping others to be engaged in ministry. I give thanks to God for new members and visitors and for the ever growing number of children, their energy, and their quest to know more about what it means to follow Jesus.

You are blessed by the music you share and the depth of vocal and instrumental music that speaks to the heart. A desire to pursue the scriptures in greater depth is evident as you mature in your faith development and live into what it means to be a faithful disciple.

Your generosity of time, talents, and resources continues to grow and you are reaping the benefits of sharing with loving, generous, and joyful hearts.

Communicating what you do has helped the community of Bowie and surrounding communities to recognize you are a church and not as a child-care facility or doctor's office. I almost shouted aloud when a person at Panera Bread recently said to me, "I know where you are. I used to think that building was a doctor's office. I like what I hear and read about the church. I would come visit if I didn't already have a church family."

I leave here with joy and satisfaction for by God's power and grace together we have accomplished some wonderful things together. There is much hope and promise for you as a church. You have come far and now the goal is to sustain and to move forward, avoiding the slippery path of returning to old habits and old ways.

May you remember your past, live in the present, and move forward into the future trusting God, following Jesus, being empowered by the Spirit as you continue to explore and discern where God continues to call and lead you!

I encourage you to:

- Remember that while Chris and I both love and serve the Lord, we come with different skill sets, different gifts, different levels of experience. So do not compare the ways we lead. Instead, embrace the leadership he offers as he uses his God-given gifts and abilities to lead you into the next phase of your faith journey.
- Keep Chris and his family in your prayers. Love them. Encourage them. Be a source of support and encouragement.

Together may you grow as faithful disciples ever loving God and loving others. You are in my prayers for a smooth transition of leadership and a special time of ministry together.

Until....has arrived. This is my last newsletter article. I am honored and humbled to have been a part of your faith journey.

Grace and peace for the journey.

Rev. Jeri Fields



## SPECIAL THANKS TO THE PNC, THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS, AND TO YOU!

I hope you will take time to thank your Pastor Nominating Committee: Jan Barbato, Dina Bickel, Bill Collins, Diane Eades, Sue Kennedy (Chair), Cathie Lambert, and Mike Mehl for their many hours of faithful and dedicated service over the last 16 months, as they searched for the candidate they would present to the congregation in preparation for the call of your next pastor.

Serving on a PNC is time consuming and at times is like riding an emotional roller coaster of highs and lows, ending higher than ever anticipation when they and the candidate discover together God's calling for both of them is to be united in ministry. Serving on the PNC is truly a journey of faith...one in which the committee members find themselves entering phases of wilderness; and by God's grace and mercy then discover how God's Spirit leads them in new and different directions that guide them into God's plan with great excitement, hope and joy.

Also, may you take time to thank the PNC's family members for their support as the call process necessitates an inordinate amount of time and energy that frequently impacts family life. PNC members are expected to remain confidential about what is going on during the process. This is difficult when couples who normally share with one another what is going on in their lives must now remain silent about what occurs during the search process. Time with family and friends is impacted as there is less opportunity for socialization and family time because the PNC members must go behind closed doors to read packets of information, listen to sermons, contact references, and pray for wisdom and guidance. For all involved this is and has been a time of personal sacrifice.

And to each of you, a special thank you to the congregation for your patience and support throughout the call process.

To God be the glory! Great things He has done, is doing, and promises to do in the future. In this time of transition and in the years to come:

May the peace of God surround you, the love of God enfold you,  
the power of God protect you, and the presence of God hold you.

Faithfully in His service,

Rev. Jeri Fields, Interim (for only a few more weeks)



After sixteen months, 70 meetings, reading almost 130 PIFs and Profiles, listening to 50+

sermons, and interviewing 17 candidates, the Pastor Nominating Committee enthusiastically announced on August 24, that a call had been extended to a candidate and accepted! Chris Deacon, his wife Heather, and their daughter Hannah visited the United Parish on September 5-7 and met the congregation. That Sunday, Chris preached during worship. There was a Congregational Meeting following the service to receive the Final Report from the PNC and to vote to approve Chris and his Terms of Call. The vote was unanimous to approve him!



This is an exciting time for our church, and for Chris and Heather as together, we begin the next chapter in the life of the United Parish. He is scheduled to begin October 8, and he and Heather are looking forward to getting to know everyone. We're sure that UPB will welcome all of them into our family.



## Sunday School for All Ages

Sunday School for all ages will begin at **9:30 A.M. September 14, 2014.**

The participants in the groups will share their faith and discuss their faith journey. Two adult classes will be offered which will be four weeks in length. One group will use Adam Hamilton's book, **Making Sense of the Bible:**

**Rediscovering the Power of Scripture Today.**

The participants will read the chapters in the book and discuss them together. They will watch the video that Adam Hamilton presents on each topic and share their thoughts.

**Receiving God's Love: The Practice of Radical Hospitality** by Robert Schnase. While reading the book, participants will discuss their personal walk with Christ and their receptivity to the grace of God. **The Practice of Radical Hospitality** focuses on inviting and making room for newcomers. Participants will discuss ways to invite God into their hearts, make space for God in their lives, receive God's love and then offer it to others. Signup sheets for Sunday Adult classes will be available in the narthex.

**"Acts of the Apostles"** Nikki Hillary will be leading a Bible study on the book, "Acts of the Apostles" on Thursday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. starting September 25th and concluding October 30th. "Acts" connects the gospels with the rest of the New Testament and records how the church was established in the first century. Following the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the bold "Acts" and testimonies of the apostles, empowered by the Holy Spirit, resulted in the conversion of many Jews and Gentiles to become followers of Jesus Christ; and the gospel spread from Jerusalem, to all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the (Roman) world, within the short period of time.

All are welcome. Tell your friends and neighbors. Please sign up or talk to Nikki Hillary ([703.941.5522](tel:703.941.5522)) if you are interested or have any questions about the study.



## Investing in Promise

Credit card tucked in my pocket,  
I walk back and forth  
pausing to peek inside each box  
of hidden promise.

Pearly white crocus, first breath of spring,  
brassy trumpets of daffodils,  
early tulips red as raspberries,  
ruffles of Aztec gold in each iris throat--  
too many choices.

I select a bulb from every box.

I am here to invest, dig, mulch, carry water,  
improve the soil, weed as needed.

Springtime thoughts swirl resplendent wonder.

Some do not plant bulbs but invest  
their seeds in growing children.

What a stunning garden that can be.

Neither garden can flourish without  
Holy beneficence of rain and sun.

It's only September, my work has begun,  
but I can't wait for whispers of spring.

Shirley Klotz Bickel, c.1014

## SEEDS

Fall SEEDS begins Wednesday, September 17 from 6:00-7:15 and will continue every Wednesday through October 29. This is great time for children of all ages and their families to come together to share a meal, worship, songs, Bible stories, discussion, and games as we all grow in our faith. If you have any great ideas, or feel called to a part of this ministry, please see Diane or Sue. And, if you would like to help by providing a meal, please check out the sign-up sheets in the Narthex or see Joey. We are looking forward to a great fall and hope to see all of you on Wednesdays!

# Communications Committee

Warm days, cool nights, the occasional late summer deluge, we return to the regular time (9:30 Sunday School and 10:45 for worship), AND the choir is back! Come on, what's not to like?

Looking back over the past year, we owe a big thank you to each and every one of you who helped support the work of your Communication and Coordination Committee. From hosted unique special performances to another CROP Walk, from our second annual BowieFest to another very 'Lime-O' Church in the Park, from another very successful Art and Music Camp to supporting the numerous service projects, we truly appreciate all your help spreading the good news of your UPB. In the near term, we will be looking for your help with the Stop Hunger Now campaign.

For those who have provided untold hours planning, preparing, teaching, leading, repairing, doing – you truly have experienced the frustration and the satisfaction of actively sharing your faith. Most people wouldn't recognize your numerous active contributions – but everybody would know if nobody did it. Our rules require term limits for those in leadership positions for a very simple reason: a vibrant congregation needs a strong balance of new ideas tempered with continuity and a sense of tradition. As we look to a new church year, we would encourage you to seek where you feel your talents and interests could be put to use in service to UPB. You say you want more families in church, more new members, more children enrolled in Art and Music Camp, more enrolled in Sunday School, more singers in the choir, more baptisms, more conversions, more...everything - then we can no longer afford to just talk about it amongst ourselves. Commit to service; it will challenge you and reward you in ways we can't describe.

And last, but certainly not least, please welcome Deepa Hillary as your new Communications and Coordination Chair. We know you will help Deepa and the team with all of the marketing, advertising, lead generation, brand management and coordination issues they will be tackling in the coming months.

Serving up an Extra Scoop of Shalom!

-Alec, Your Communications and Coordination Outgoing Committee Chair

## Committee Chairs

Committee Chairs are responsible for overseeing a particular committee. A liaison from the Board offers them support and resources, as needed. The term for a Committee Chair is one year and may be continued for up to three years. At the end of a third year of service, a Committee Chair steps aside offering leadership opportunities for others in the church and to give themselves a time of rest for renewal after their time of service and commitment.

This year we thank Julissa Orta, Chair for Children, Youth and Families (CYF) and Alec Burgess, Chair for the Communications Committee (COMCOM) for their invaluable service and leadership in their respective committees over the last three years. Under their leadership each committee has embarked upon risk-taking ministry that presented new ideas and opportunities to engage in ministry.

The new Chair for CYF is Kathy McIndoe. The new Chair for COMCOM is Deepa Hillary. And yes, both are looking for additional committee members. Please see them if you have an interest in either area.

On September 14, the Committee Chairs for 2014-2015 will be commissioned:

- Children, Youth, and Families: Kathy McIndoe (1st year)
- Christian Spiritual Formation: Alice Collins (2nd year)
- Communications: Deepa Hillary (1st year)
- Community Service and Mission: Doug Snyder (2nd year)
- Membership and Fellowship: Jan Barbato (2nd year)
- Ministry Support: Tom Chin (3rd year)

Each Committee Chair welcomes you to join their committee. There is room for everyone!



# Mission and Service



## School Backpacks

Committee members, led by Judy Farrell, put together eight backpacks of school supplies donated by our congregation. The backpacks were given to the Central Union Mission in Washington, D.C.



## Stop Hunger NOW

Saturday, September 20 beginning at 10 AM the United Parish of Bowie and First Community UCC will pack 10,000 meals for STOP HUNGER NOW. This is an easy fun-packed mission activity for ALL ages. The assembly process combines rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a flavoring mix including 21 essential vitamins and minerals into small meal packages.

There are two shifts on September 20: 10-NOON and NOON to 2:00. Know that it is possible to package 10,000 meals in 2 hours, so suggest you come early. There is a need to help set up and clean up.

This past week 366,259 meals were packed. Total meals packed thus far for the year: 159,191,509.

These meal packages are shipped around the world to support school feeding programs and crisis relief in 65 countries. The food stores easily, transports quickly and has a shelf-life of two years. Generous donations totaling \$2,900 will be used to cover the cost of the food and materials. Thank you to the members and friends of UPB for making this mission activity possible and to Kathy Busch for leading us!

## Family Crisis Center (FCC)

Thank you for supporting The Family Crisis Center each month! Our meals are a blessing to the women and children at the Crisis Center. The upcoming themes are as follows:

**September 21: Tailgate-** chicken, burgers or sliders, wings, chili, salads, dessert.

**October 19: Italian-** spaghetti and meatballs, spaghetti with meatless sauce or vegetable sauce; baked ziti, salad, dessert.

**November 16: Traditional Thanksgiving Meal-** turkey casserole, sliced turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, corn, pumpkin pie, pecan pie.

Please find the clipboard on the narthex table and sign up.



## Living Waters for the World (LWW)

Please continue to help the children's Christian Education program with its service project to support the effort of LWW in bringing clean drinking water to all God's children in poor and developing countries all around the world. You may find the large water bottle in the narthex to deposit any amount you wish.





Once again, it was another amazing week at the United Parish when we held our 4<sup>th</sup> annual Art & Music Camp. Our theme this year was "Weird Animals: Where Jesus' Love is One-of-a-Kind". Weird is defined as special . . . unique . . . rare . . . never been seen before . . . one of a kind! Children explored Jesus' unconditional and one-of-a-kind love as they rotated through stations of art, music, games, and drama. Each day opened with our theme song, "All Around the World" and a visit from Dr. Paws, who introduced us to the Bible point for the day.

Even when you're left out . . . Jesus loves you!  
 Even though you're different . . . Jesus loves you!  
 Even when you don't understand . . . Jesus loves you!  
 Even when you do wrong . . . Jesus loves you!  
 Even when you're afraid . . . Jesus loves you!

There was an opportunity for each group to talk about times when they felt left out or different, didn't understand or made a mistake, or have been afraid. We learned there are verses in the Bible that could help them during these times. Verses included: Matthew 20:28, Ephesians 1:10, Luke 6:31 1 John 4:10, and Matthew 14:27. Everyone received a Bible Buddy each day with the Bible point and verse to help them remember that Jesus loves us no matter what!

At the end of each morning, everyone gathered together to share what they learned that day. It was also a time of worship. One of the most powerful moments was when all of us had a chance to talk about something we had done wrong such as: not paying attention to parents; hurting someone's feelings; not telling the truth; even having an unkind or mean thought. Then everyone wrote their sin on a piece of paper and placed the paper on a cross. Observing the cross with our sins on it, helped many to understand what Jesus did for us. We concluded each day with the song, "God Loves Us So". Here's a link to the video summarizing our week of camp - <http://youtu.be/hvK251ZveMY>

Thanks to all the volunteers who help to make this week a huge success!





### A LETTER TO THE CONGREGATION

Dear Members and Friends of the United Parish of Bowie,

A pastoral relationship, at its best, is an intimate, professional relationship with clear boundaries. As your Interim Pastor for the last 33 months, I believe the call to walk the phase of interim ministry with you has been a positive one for both you and me.

I realize that for some of you the transitioning of my leaving as your Gap and then Interim Pastor may be difficult. Inevitably there is pain in the ending of a pastoral relationship as one chapter of your life as a congregation comes to closure and a new chapter begins.

Please understand that once your new pastor, Chris Deacon, arrives on October 8, I will no longer be available for baptisms, weddings, or funerals; nor to discuss church matters with you. Know that I will honor these boundaries. I trust that you will respect these boundaries and will graciously transfer your pastoral needs to Chris.

While I will miss you, I am very excited and hopeful about the next phase of ministry for UPB under the leadership of your next pastor, Rev. Chris Deacon. May together you serve the Lord as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ!

God bless you! Grace and peace for the journey.

Rev. Jeri Fields

The United Parish of Bowie 2515 Mitchellville Road Bowie, Maryland 20716  
Phone: 301.249.6411 Email: [pastorjери.upb@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjери.upb@gmail.com)



Opt-Out: UPB's Use of Names and Images - While we never publish individual children's names without expressed parental consent, we do publish images of groups of children. In addition, at times we publish both names and images of individual adults, as well as groups. If you wish to not have any names or images for members of your family published, please contact Dina Bickel to opt-out of future publications.