



To all my good friends at the United Parish:

In case you haven't heard, I will be leaving the United Parish this month. My last Sunday with you will be on May 18. The next day the movers will arrive at my house, pack up my furniture and things, and then continue on to the Eades house, where many boxes of books await them in the basement. Roy and Diane, who have been enormously kind and long suffering, will no doubt be happy to have their basement back again.

My new job will be at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville, Kentucky. My title will be Coordinator for International Evangelism and Frontier Areas. This is a position in the World Missions department of the church in which I have worked for many years, though never in the United States. At the moment the church is attempting to reverse years of decline in the numbers of missionaries sent abroad, and a number of divergent groups within the church are supporting this effort. Taking this position at this time will give me a wonderful opportunity to influence and help guide the PCUSA at a crucial moment in its missions endeavors around the world. Having worked in this area for many years, and having written about it as an historian, I feel well prepared for the task. It may even be that God has prepared me for just this opportunity – I'd like to think so.

My only regret in taking this job is that I will be leaving all of you before there is a permanent pastor in place for the United Parish. My hope is that the appointment of this person is not too far off, perhaps even a matter of months away. In any event, the same God who goes with me will stay with you, and all will workout according to his will.

It only remains to be said that I have very much enjoyed and benefited from being your interim pastor these past nineteen months. It has been a privilege and a blessing to have been with you. I have helped to guide you though most of the interim process, and you have helped and supported me at every step along the way. May God bless us both as we each prepare to begin new chapters in our faith journeys.

Michael Parker

Thanks

Just a little note to give a BIG thank you to our departing interim pastor, The Rev. Dr. Michael Parker, for his patience and guidance when we really needed it at United Parish. We send you off with the very best wishes in your new career, Mike. We will miss you!

Merci

Thank You!

Hvala

Gracias

Grazie



The “Song Time/Story Time” for Pre-schoolers

Our pre-school children now receive a short Sunday school lesson by way of songs and stories during the worship service, thanks to the time and talents of the many members of our church. Donna Tanner and Marva Connolly have been running the “Song Time” by teaching the children popular Christian songs often with guitar accompaniment. Many others including Linda & Kelley Hutchinson, Patty Keys, Alice Collins, Nancy Snyder, Becky DeMeo, and Pearl Donovan have been helping with the “Story Time” by reading stories of the Bible to the children using various teaching aids.

Singing and storytelling are tremendous ways of introducing early Christian education to the youngest members of our congregation. Stories can be read or told in a variety of creative ways – by simply using sounds, words, facial expressions, body movements, etc. and/or by using visual aids such as books, pictures, flannel board items, puppets and slide shows. Those who are interested in participating in this effort just once or several times a year are requested to contact Nikki Hillary or sign up in the narthex.

News Briefs

The Pastor Nominating Committee is continuing to do its work, with several candidates currently being given serious consideration. No more can be said at this time, but the committee is optimistic. Please keep praying for this hardworking group!

Four of our high school students will be graduating in June of this year and will be celebrated in the service of Sunday, June 15. The students are Mary Bush, Kelly Hutchinson,

Will Voorhies, and Dieudonne Ndonue. *Au revoir* – until we meet again!

Karla Roskos and Doug Snyder have been reappointed to state bodies. Karla will serve on the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission through May, 2009; Doug, on the Board of Directors for the Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC) through June, 2010. MLSC administers grants to organizations serving the poor in civil matters.

CHRISTMAS IN APRIL - 2008

This year UPB traveled to Capital Heights to assist an elderly woman living alone with a number of needed tasks. UPB was represented by Tom Chin, Dina Bickel, Alec and Robin Burgess, Gene and Jan Barbato, Herb Sheppard, and Dieudonne Ndonue (representing the youth group). While this group was smaller than in past years, it was an ambitious one and took on several formidable tasks undaunted. These included replacing a wall and tile in a bathroom shower (including scraping grout off numerous old tiles that needed to be recycled) and pulling up and replacing an entire vinyl kitchen floor. Everyone worked hard and stuck to the various jobs until satisfactorily completed. We were teamed with County Executive Jack Johnson's staff and they seemed to appreciate our expertise. The county provided donuts and coffee for breakfast and lunch came from Outback Steakhouse and Chick-Fil-A so hunger was never an issue. I suppose the highest form of flattery came the next day when I received a call from the Executive's office from a woman who wasn't there but had heard about the job we did. The first question was whether we were a home remodeling company. She had a leak around her front door and her coworkers recommend that she give us a call. Amazing! We're already looking forward to next year. If you know someone in the county who owns their home and could use some repairs and is elderly and/or disabled please let me know and I'll show you how to get them into the system for the next Christmas in April. Thanks again to those named above for giving up a day to work hard for the benefit of someone less fortunate. Having Sunday as a "day of rest" took on new meaning for all of us. See you next year!

Herb Sheppard

**Christmas in April
in pictures ...**





May 17, 2008

(RAIN OR SHINE)

We need: Your cast-offs, treasures, clothing, small furniture, cookware, books, baby items, household items, sports and fitness equipment, and much more!

Please bring your items to the church Friday evening (5/16) until 7:30 pm or between 7 am and 8 am on Saturday morning (5/17).

Also, can you help set up at 7:00 am on Saturday morning?? Or help separate items on Friday evening??

Please contact Becky DeMeo 301-249-6184



UPB Pics of the month



The men's breakfast group. Pictured from the left are Herb Sheppard, Mike Parker, Mike Mehl, Roy Eades and Doug Snyder. (Tom Chin took the picture.)



UPB is currently in the process of selecting new carpeting and flooring for the sanctuary.



Patty Keys is leading a project to write the history of the UPB. Jan Barbato and Diane Eades, pictured here, are helping out.

The Origins of Mother's Day and Father's Day

Abraham Lincoln wrote gratefully of his mother, "All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother." He was writing of his step mother, Sarah Johnson, who loved him and encouraged him to better himself through education. Lincoln was estranged from his father throughout his adult life, but he always had a soft spot in his heart for his mother. Perhaps many of us feel that way about our mothers. We honor them because they gave us life and taught us our first and most important lessons in life. Oliver Wendal Holmes once wrote, "The real religion of the world comes from women much more than from men - from mothers most of all, who carry the key of our souls in their bosoms."

I remember when I was a child I asked my mother why there was a Mother's Day and a Father's Day, but no Children's Day. Her response was a loud guffaw and the glib comment, "Everyday is Children's Day." Fair enough, but where did these days come from on which we honor our parents?

The earliest days celebrating motherhood were held in honor of the primal goddesses. In ancient Egypt the people honored Isis, the mother of the pharaohs. In ancient Greece they honored the goddess Rhea, who was credited as being the mother of all the principal gods. Her Roman equivalent was Cybele, the *Magna Mater*, or Great Mother. In the era of the early Christian Church, the fourth Sunday of Lent was a day set aside to honor Mother Church, the church in which a person was baptized. In the seventeenth century, England changed the holiday to "Mothering Day," a day in which the Lenten fast was suspended in order to fete Mum.

The Puritans who came to the American colonies abandoned this holiday, as they abandoned all of the other traditional Catholic holy days such as Christmas and Easter. Julia Ward Howe, author of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*, attempted to revive the tradition honoring mothers in 1870. In response to the carnage of the Civil War, she wanted a day on which men would have to honor peace and motherhood. The idea was embraced by some eighteen American cities for a few years in the 1870s and then it died out.

In the following years Anna Jarvis of West Virginia attempted to carry on the tradition as a way to unite families divided by the Civil War. In 1908 her daughter Anna M. Jarvis convinced her mother's church, Andrew's Methodist Church, to honor her mother by celebrating Mother's Day. Jarvis then devoted herself full time to petitioning state governments to celebrate Mother's Day. In 1912 West Virginia was the first state to do so, and in 1914 Woodrow Wilson signed a law declaring the second Sunday of May to be Mother's Day. The idea was embraced by the flower industry, which both promoted and exploited the day. Jarvis spent much of the next three decades of her life fighting against what she considered the misuse of Mother's Day.

The American Mother's Day is now celebrated in at least forty countries, including such diverse countries as Argentina (*Dia de la madre*), France (*La Fete de Meres*), Yugoslavia (*Dechiyi Dan*), Bahrain (*Ruz-e Madar*), Denmark (*Mors Dag*), and Italy (*La Festa delia Mamma*).



**Anna M. Jarvis
(1863-1948)**

Sad to say, Father's Day seems largely to have been invented as a complement to Mother's Day. It also originated in a West Virginia church in 1908. In the second decade of the century it was supported by William Jennings Bryan and President Woodrow Wilson. President Calvin Coolidge first suggested it as a national holiday in the 1920s, and President Lyndon Johnson set aside the third Sunday of June for the holiday in 1966. Father's Day did not become an official holiday until 1972 when Richard Nixon signed it into law.

Mike Parker