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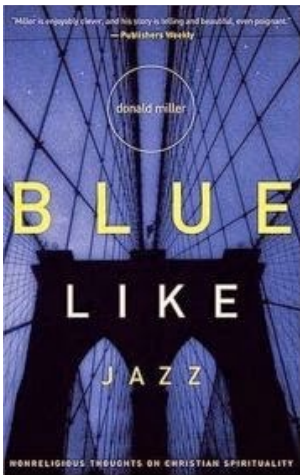
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UNITED PARISH OF BOWIE

United in Christ - Our Mission: To Serve



As we move through Lent, some of you may have taken on different Lenten practices. Some of you may have given something up, such as sweets or soft drinks. Some of you may have added something each day, such as starting the day by reading scripture or adding a time of prayer. Some of you may be focusing on repentance. The first aspect of repentance is confessing our sin.

One story of confession that has always stuck with me comes from “Blue Like Jazz” by Don Miller. Every year, at Reed College, where the author attended, there was a huge campus wide three day party where basically the entire campus gave into debauchery. Drinking, drug use, and sex were everywhere. Miller was part of a small group of Christians on campus and they wanted to do something to make their presence felt at this party. This was a risky endeavor because Christians were looked down upon at this particular school, which was very well known for its secular and humanist ways.

So he and his friends decided to build a confession booth in the middle of campus. They bought wood and tarps and dressed up in Monk's costumes. It took a while but somebody finally wandered into their confession booth. They were shocked to discover that this wasn't a booth where you confess your sins to the Christian group, but where the Christian group confessed their sins to you. Miller and his friends started by confessing some of the big things done in the name of Christianity, such as the Crusades and the Salem Witch Trials, but then they got to the more personal stuff. They confessed that they are called to feed the hungry and they haven't done that as well as they should. They confessed that they are often judgmental. They confessed that while Jesus commanded his followers to love those that persecute him, they tended to lash out in anger. They confessed to many different wrongs committed by them personally and by the greater Church. Understandably, all who came to the “confession booth” were both amazed and touched.

This story touched me on a deep level. I share it with you to bring up two points. First, as Christians we have to remember that some people may use us as an example of Christianity. If we are known as a Christian but also known for talking down to people or gossiping or being a bad person, in general, our local church or even our greater church could be judged by those actions. We could be seen as hypocrites or people who think that they are better than others. We don't have to be perfect, nobody is. However, we do need to try to talk the talk and not just walk the walk. We should

try to be more Christ-like in all aspects of our lives, not just on Sunday mornings. People should be able to look at the way we live and know there is something different about us.

This leads into the second point I wanted to bring up. We are not perfect. We sin, we make mistakes, we hurt people. Nobody was without sin, except for Christ. As much as we try to be like Christ, we will fall short. However, as we prepare to celebrate Easter, we have to remember that the events of Easter gave us victory over sin and death. The does not mean that we will never mess up or that we will never sin again. It means when we do fall short of God's idea for us, God will pick us up, dust us off, and forgive us. We are called to live lives of grace! Part of living lives of grace is acknowledging when we sin, whether it is against God or against somebody else. That is was Don Miller's confession booth was all about, acknowledging that they sinned both against God and against their neighbors! In acknowledging, or confessing, that sin, we are forgiven! Only then, can we strive to be the people God call us to be.

Faithfully,
Chris

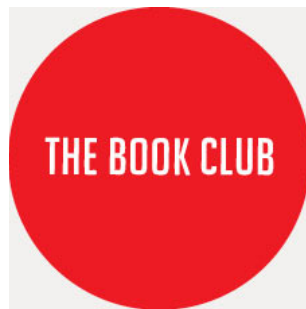


Ladies Fellowship Time

We had our first one of the year! Any and all UPB ladies are encouraged to meet. We will share a meal together, enjoy fellowship, and make plans for future activities. **Thursday, March 26 at 6:30 p.m.** we will gather at **Golden Pavilion** (6938 Laurel-Bowie Rd in Bowie). We are hoping for a great turn out so mark your calendars now! If you have any questions, please contact Jan Barbato via phone at [443-949-0568](tel:443-949-0568) or email at janbarbato@comcast.net.

Book Club

Have you read a book and wonder what others might think of it? Wonder no more. Come join our church book club! We read all types of books, for example: "The Poisonwood Bible", "The Boys in the Boat", "The Light Between Oceans", "An Edible History of Humanity", "Bad Religion", "My Beloved World" and many more.



We meet the 1st Friday of the month, 7pm, at the home of Gene and Jan Barbato (443-949-0568). On March 6th we meet to discuss "Gone Girl" by Gillian Flynn; April 9th "Hunter" by Robert Bidinotto; May 1st "The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog" by Bruce Duncan Perry.

We also invite others to suggest a book they've read or would like to read. All are welcome! Please talk to Jan Barbato or Cathie Lambert for more information.



Have you ever been puzzled by what we mean by Chat and Chew, why we continue to have it, who brings the food, and when?

What and Why

We want to provide opportunities to connect among members and friends of the United Parish, and to facilitate an atmosphere that is welcoming and inviting. Connections promote participation in the ongoing mission and service opportunities of our church. It can be a great time to ask questions or promote ongoing activities or a new idea you have to connect UPB to our community and beyond (chat). Food provides motivation to linger (and chew).

When

Chat and Chew is the Second and Fourth Sundays of each month, in the narthex, immediately after worship.

Who

- **All** are invited to participate, whether you bring food or not.
- You are encouraged to bring a family favorite treat or snack, **especially an ethnic favorite in your home.**
- If your **last name** begins with **A through G**, your suggested week to bring a plate of food to share is the **Second Sunday.**
- If your **last name** begins with **H through Z** your suggested week to bring a plate of food to share is on the **Fourth Sunday.**

What should I bring?

Here are just a few suggestions: Cheese, cheese ball, sliced sausages and crackers; vegetables, olives, pickles, dips, hummus, guacamole, chips; cut up sandwiches; deviled eggs; chili con queso and chips; shrimp or other dips, shrimp spread with Wheat Thins; chicken wings; crabbies; nuts; cut up fruit; meatballs or little sausages in sauce; cookies, brownies, donuts, beignets, lemon bars.



Who Is This Man?

Will no one cover nearly naked body
 who will lift thorns from throbbing head
 no tourniquet stops Holy blood
 running down hands and feet
 lips spell water Water WATER
 no one ventures to care
 still he hangs
 to pay the charge
 for my embrace of eros ways

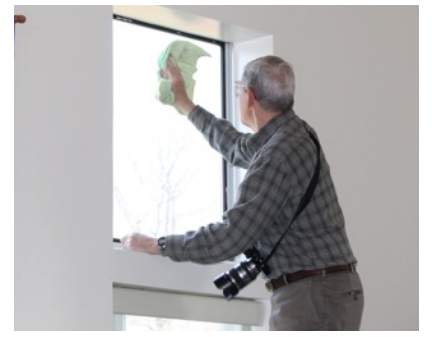
earth shakes callous solders cower
 blackness trembles all and King of Jews
 only one dares declare
 "Truly this was the Son of God."

Finding My Lord

I stoop to pray, "It IS I, Lord."
 Once a coward to cry belief
 among the crowd of "Crucify...Crucify."
 I did not meet Him on Emmaus Road
 or in the upper room.
 I wrestled with Him in sleep and wakefulness
 'til now I do confess my fears, my lack
 of loyalty, my own unworthiness.
 After the storm of guilt was drowned
 I cried to be reconciled.
 Peace washes me clean with His promise
 to be with me 'til the end of ages.

Shirley Klotz Bickel, c. 2015

A Look Back at Winter 2015



SEEDS



Winter SEEDS began with remembering the past year. Everyone shared highlights of times spent with family, friends, at church, a special vacation, and holidays, as well as something that we considered our proudest moment.

Bible passages included Acts 20:35 and 1 Corinthians 11:2 and we discussed how God is always present with us. Everyone had fun making snowflakes that could be used as part of a collage to celebrate the special moments in 2014.

The following session focused on faith. ***“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see”*** from Hebrews 11:1 was read. We talked about some things that happen in the winter that we can’t see, such as animals hibernating

and bulbs in the ground starting to sprout. Even though we can’t see them, we know this is happening. And even though we can’t see God, our faith allows us to trust that He is always working in us. Reading the story about the woman who gave her only two coins to Jesus helped us to understand how she placed all her trust in Him. Everyone played a game called “Faithful Pitch” and gave examples of different ways to show our faith and trust in God: **time** (reading the Bible or praying); **money** (giving to the church or people who need it); **objects** (sharing what we have with those who don’t have as much); and **obedience** (acting in kind ways; and loving and forgiving others).

The next week we read the following Bible passages to help us understand how much God loves us: Luke 2:1-7, the story of Jesus’ birth and how God came to live and walk among us; Luke 23: 32-49, the story of Jesus’ death on the cross for our sins; and Romans 8:38-39, what Jesus’ love means for us. Playing “Jesus Loves Me” on the chimes was great fun. Even Pastor Chris joined in!

Finally, we had a full house making stained glass valentines that were passed out to everyone in the congregation on February 15. There was lots of fun and laughter as the creativity flowed. Thanks to all the helping hands!!

And thanks to everyone who provided food and helped with clean up. A special thank you to Joey and Terry who continue to help coordinate the meals. Spring SEEDS begins April 22 and will continue through May 20. You can sign up to help with meals on the sheet in the Narthex or online.

Friendly Reminders



March 4, 11, 18, 25

March 14

March 29

April 2

April 3

April 22-May 20

April 25

June 6

June 24

June 28

July 12-18

July 27-31

Lenten Dinner and Devotionals for all ages

Warm Nights

Palm Sunday Worship, 10:45 AM

Maundy Thursday Potluck with Communion, 6:15 PM

Good Friday Worship Service, 7:30 PM

Spring SEEDS

Christmas in April

Bowiefest

Watoto Children’s Choir

Worship in the Park

Mars Hill Family Mission Trip

5th Annual Art & Music Camp

Mission and Service

Warm Nights

The congregation will be providing our second meal on **March 14th** to homeless persons during the winter season. The host church is Village Baptist. The dinner meal will consist of beef stew, along with salad, bread, and dessert.

Bowie Community Food Pantry

A special donation of 188 cans was made to the Food Pantry as a result of a "Super Bowl" challenge issued by the Deacons; they would match the number of cans donated by the congregation up to 100 cans. To make things interesting, there were two baskets for the cans, one for each team. The number of the cans given in the name of the Seahawks greatly outnumbered those given to the Patriots.



Christmas in April

The United Parish will once again participate in this PG County outreach for disabled or handicapped homeowners that need assistance with home repairs, yard work, and maintenance. UPB has participated in this program, which is always held on the last Saturday in April,

for twenty years. This year we will convene on **Saturday April 25th** at a home located in District Heights.

We will again be partnered with Trinity Episcopal Church of Upper Marlboro MD. What a wonderful opportunity to help others and simultaneously mingle with other members of faith from our local community.

Look for a sign-up sheet and more specific details on the home at the beginning of April. In the meantime please save **April 25th** on your calendar for this rewarding event.



Mars Hill Mission Trip

From **Sunday, July 12th to Saturday, July**

18th, members of the United Parish of Bowie along with Christ Memorial Presbyterian Church (Columbia, MD) as well as members of Shadyside Presbyterian Church (Pittsburgh, PA) will work together to improve the lives of dozens of residents of Madison County, NC. The mission trip is for all ages; VBS-style activities for children under 11 and home repair/refurbishment work for anyone over the age of 11. We will lodge and dine at Mars Hill University in Mars Hill, NC. Accommodations are apartment/dorm style and includes air conditioning. For more information or if you have any questions, please speak with Pastor Chris.

Board Corner



The Board has been working in several different areas over the past few months including:

- Completing the Personnel section of the United Parish of Bowie Policy Manual. Work on this manual has been on-going since 2011 and continues to be a work in progress.
- Establishing a Personnel Committee: Terry Drown (Chair), Gene Barbato, and Mike Mehl
- Allocating funds from a special gift as follows: Stop Hunger Now - \$3,000, Mars Hill Mission Trip - \$2,000, and TV monitors for the sanctuary - \$2,000.
- Setting permanent dates for the Annual Congregational Meeting (fourth Sunday in January) and the election of new Board members (first Sunday in December).
- Approving the purchase of a new printer for the office that allows us to now print bulletins at church. Thanks to Kathy and Will Busch who had been printing them at home.
- Approving the purchase of a new heat pump for the day care side of the church. There are also new programmable thermostats on both sides, which should improve our energy efficiency.

In addition, a Leadership Retreat for Board members and committee chairs was held on Saturday, January 24. The morning began with a short worship time of prayer, song, and Scripture reading (Luke 5:1-11), followed by everyone sharing a Bible story or passage that reflected our church. There was time for both small and whole group discussion of our church's ministries, such as Art & Music Camp, Christmas in April, Family Crisis Center Meal, SEEDS, Sunday School, and Worship, as well as various fellowship activities. The retreat ended with lunch fellowship.

It is important to the Board that our congregation is kept informed on discussions that are taking place and decisions that are being made for the good of the United Parish. Minutes of Board meetings, along with agendas, monthly financial statements, and the pastor's report, are kept in a binder in the church library.

Board members for 2015 are: Gene Barbato (vice moderator), Michael Mehl (treasurer), Walter Trafton (secretary), Elsie Carroll, Terry Drown, Roy Eades, Sue Kennedy, Julissa Orta, and Sumera Saudagar.

Committee liaisons are: Julissa – Children, Youth, and Family; Terry – Communications; Gene – Membership and Fellowship; Roy – Ministry Support; Sumera – Mission and Service; and Sue – Spiritual Formation.

The Board is meant to represent the membership of the United Parish. Please feel free to contact any Board member or Pastor Chris with your ideas, suggestions and/or concerns.



Daylight Saving Time: March 8th

Don't forget to turn your clocks AHEAD 1 hour
before retiring for bed Saturday night!

Art & Music Camp 2015

Save the date! The United Parish of Bowie will hold its fifth annual Art & Music Camp, a half day fun-filled faith based camp for preschoolers through fifth grade. This year's camp will be July 27-31, from 9:00 am to noon. The children will rotate through stations of art, music, games, and drama. If you have any talents in any of these areas, or just want to be a part of helping children grow in their faith, please talk to either Diane or Sue about volunteering. There is something for everyone to do!



Experience Holy Week at the United Parish of Bowie

March 29	Palm Sunday	10:45 AM
April 2	Maundy Thursday Potluck w/Communion	6:15 PM
April 3	Good Friday Worship	7:30 PM
April 5	Easter Sunday	10:45 AM

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www.unitedparishbowie.org



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.