

United Parish of Bowie

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

SUMMER 2010
NEWSLETTER

Receiving Prayer

About 10 years ago, I read something that has shaped some of my thinking about prayer and receiving gifts. I've adapted it and I'd like to share it with you. It is based on the second chapter of Henri Nouwen's book *With Open Hands*.

Prayer, by its nature, is receiving. When we pray, we seek to open ourselves to all that is going on in our lives trusting that God will become known to us. But openness doesn't simply come. It requires a confession that we are limited, dependent, weak, and even sinful. When we pray, we say that we are not God and we do not want to be God. We stretch out our hands and become vulnerable as we wait for the gift of life. It is difficult to even begin because prayer is countercultural.

The wisdom of the world says, "It is best to stand firm, and to get a good grip on what's yours. You have to protect yourself against people who want to take it away from you. You've got to be on guard against ambush. If you don't make a fist, and don't scramble to get what you need then you're just asking to be threadbare and destitute. You'll end up trying to find mediocre satisfaction in a kind of generosity which no one appreciates anyway." The wisdom of the world says, "If you open your hands, they will pound in the nails... Smart people keep on their toes, with muscles ready and fists clenched." Too often, I fear this is what our prayer life looks like.

How can we expect to receive any gift in this mood? It's no wonder praying presents such a problem because it requires a readiness to unclench your fists and let go of feelings which tell you to keep a safe distance. It requires that we live in expectation that God, who makes everything new, will cause us and enable us to be reformed. We're able to become people of prayer only when we are ready to be open to receive the gifts God has prepared for us.

Receiving isn't as easy as it sounds. When you give, you are the master of the situation, you can dole out goods to those you think deserving. You have control and you can enjoy the power that affords you. When you receive it's easy to feel a sense of indebtedness, or as if there's a disparity in the relationship. So it's understandable that people often want to give a gift in return as soon as possible after receiving one, to reestablish a balance and a sense of equality. It's not surprising that among people we probably see more trading of gifts than receiving them. But with prayer, it's something entirely different because the gift we're offered is the very life breath of God, the Spirit poured out on us through Jesus Christ. It is a gift that frees us from fear and gives us new room to live. And perhaps the challenge of the gospel lies precisely in the invitation to receive a gift for which we can give nothing in return; a gift we can only embrace and make room for as we open our lives in prayer to be renewed and expanded by the presence and the power of the living God.

God's peace to you — and may we all become people of prayer!

Pastor Dan Holland



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Special Summer Sunday Services:

Chartering Sunday & Luncheon ~ June 6th
A celebration remembering the formation of our church. Luncheon after worship.

Graduation Sunday ~ June 13th
A time to celebrate all the UPB graduates!

Appreciation Sunday ~ June 20th
A time to thank to all who have made the 2009 to 2010 program year a great success.

Youth Mission Commissioning ~ July 18th
We will commission the youth and adult volunteers heading out on the week long summer mission to West Virginia, sending them off with our prayers.

Church & Picnic at the Park ~ August 1st
Church will take place at the West Pavilion at Allen Pond Park. Picnic to follow.

Youth Led Sunday ~ August 8th
The Youth will be leading worship, sharing reflections on the summer mission.

***Summer Sunday
Worship Times***
June ~ 11 am
July & August ~ 10 am



UPB Library

We now have a “browsing” library— with sections including: Family & Self, Comparative Religion, Classic Christian Writers/Theologians, Bible Studies/Commentaries, Contemporary Writings, Faith & Politics/Science/Environment, The Bible & Biblical Reference Books, Music/Art Related, and Spiritual Growth. A children’s section is located in the CE room and a section for youth is planned. The periodical collection includes “Christianity Today,” “The Christian Century,” and “Sojourners,” along with “Presbyterian Outlook.” All books except specified reference books can be checked out indefinitely; periodicals, for two weeks. The library also has assorted video tapes and Parish Board meeting minutes. Doug Snyder, the librarian, welcomes suggestions and material donations.

Adult Education

Adult Education will continue the course “Understanding Islam” Sundays at 10 am during the month of June. Adult Education does not meet during July and August but eagerly anticipates a wonderful kick off of the 2010-2011 program year in September.

Chat & Chew

Enjoy a time to mingle with old and new friends while sampling good food in the Narthex, the 2nd (A to G treats) and 4th (H to Z treats) Sundays of every month after worship.



Church at the Park

Sunday, August 1st at 10 am we will enjoy a casual, summer Sunday worship service at the West Pavilion at Allen Pond Park.

Plan to stay for the All Church Picnic and fellowship time following the worship service.

Invite friends and family!



Women's Night Out

UPB women will gather for a relaxing evening enjoying a time of fellowship, delicious dessert, and a movie. Friday, June 11th at 7 pm in the Simpson Home.



Baseball!

Meet up with all your UPB friends at the Baysox game!



We will meet at the 3rd base side. Join us on Sunday, July 11th at 6:05 for Super Hero night against Trenton and on Saturday, August 21st at 6:35 for Fairytale Night & Fireworks vs. Richmond.

We want to hear from you!

Please send all announcements,

photos, and articles to

upbannounce@gmail.com .

Fall Newsletter Deadline:

Sunday, August 22nd.

Prayer Group

A time of prayer the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7 pm in the Holland Home. Join the prayer time or simply send your prayer requests to Pastor Dan. Meeting 6/15, 7/20, and special meeting 8/31.

Book Club

Don't miss the discussion of "the Help" by Kathryn Stockett, June 4th at 7 pm in the Barbato Home. Future meetings and books to be announced.

Men's Breakfast

1st and 3rd Tuesdays of every month at 7:45 am at the Bowie Bob Evans.

Men's Night Out

The 4th Tuesday of every month at 7 pm at Bowie Glory Days.

Walking Group

Walking this summer on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings around the Crofton loop. Contact Rebecca Holland for more information.

UPB Women

An ongoing Women's Fellowship Meeting and a Women's Bible Study are forming and looking for input from you! Please take a minute to write down the following and send it/bring it to UPB or upbannounce@gmail.com:

- Are you interested in Fellowship or Bible Study?
- When are you usually able to meet? Need Childcare?
- Fellowship: What activities would you like?
- Bible Study: What would you like to study?

2010 UPB Spring Leadership Retreat

Over 20 people spent a sunny Saturday morning in prayer, team building, and discussion. Thank you to all who came to vision the future and plan the way forward for the United Parish of Bowie. Mark your calendars for the Fall Leadership Retreat Saturday, September 25th.



Committee Re-Formation by Pastor Dan Holland

Over the summer, we will move toward the new way of organizing the ministry of the United Parish that we voted to endorse at the most recent congregational meeting in March. The goal is to have all of the re-formed committees functioning in September. This process has been designed to increase the church's ministry capacity and effectiveness.

Who's going to do it?

We hope that everyone will be involved! As we move forward in discerning how to faithfully follow God's call, we need to work together. The church is the body of Christ in the world. Every voice is important and each person is a vital part of the ministry.

What are they going to do?

Each of us should sit down and consider the question, "Where might God be calling me to serve?" The committee chairs will serve up to three, renewable, one-year commitments. The committee members will actively participate in the prayerful discernment and vision of the committee. Initially the committees' task will be to pray, to think about how they might best meet their stated purpose and to develop a medium range plan for their ministry area. They'll be asked to communicate their hopes, dreams, plans and needed support to the Parish Board and the communications committee. And they'll be asked to develop an evaluation plan so that a year from now they might know what to let go of, what to keep doing, and what to start doing.

How are they going to do it?

How we do the work of the church is in fact a large part of the work that we do! Because of that, the committee meetings are going to be based on connecting with each other, connecting with God and connecting with our mission while we complete the tasks at hand. We hope that the people who serve on these committees will do so at least in part for their own spiritual growth as well as to be of service to the church and its mission. And through it all, with God's help, in the committees, the church, the community and the world, we will be **United in Christ** and we will live out **Our Mission: to Serve**.

What about the hands on ministry tasks?

The committees will focus on prayerful discernment, vision, planning and evaluation of their ministry areas and they will commission teams or individuals to complete the hands on ministry tasks. The team members or individuals will often, but not always, be a part of the committee and definitely will be in communication with the committee as they are sent out to be God's hands and feet at UPB and in the world. (For example: The Children, Youth, and Families Committee prayerfully discerns the curriculum used in Sunday School class but the Sunday School Team of teachers carries out the hands on task of teaching.)

As you discern where God might be calling you to serve and to grow in the coming year, feel free to contact me with any questions or to let me know how you would like to be involved in the life and ministry of the United Parish.

Re-Formed Committees and Purpose Statements

Children Youth and Families Committee

To provide opportunities for children, youth and their families to participate in the life of the United Parish, and to provide opportunities for the adults of the church to participate in the lives of the children and youth.

Christian Spiritual Formation Committee

To build a culture and environment that encourages the spiritual growth of everyone who walks through the doors of the United Parish.

Communications Committee

To inform and educate members and friends of the church as well as the larger community about the life and ministry of the United Parish.

Membership and Fellowship Committee

To provide congregational care and opportunities to connect among members and friends of the United Parish, and to facilitate an atmosphere that's welcoming to newcomers and appreciative of the people who give of themselves in ministry.

Ministry Support Committee

To manage facilities, finances and church records.

Mission and Service Committee

To provide opportunities for people to help others in need through hands-on service and giving to communities outside of the church: locally and globally.

Parish Board

To faithfully represent the practical needs and foster the spiritual growth of the congregation in its mission to serve Christ.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who has made the 2009-2010 program year amazing!

Please plan to attend **Appreciation Sunday on June 20th** when we will say a special thank you to everyone during the worship service.

Help show your appreciation by personally thanking everyone you know who

has served in ministry this year whether it was teaching, leadership, sharing gifts of music or behind the scenes. It has been a great year.

Please also offer a special thank you to Nikki Hillary and Doug Snyder who are

transitioning from their leadership roles as committee chairs this month.



Local Service: Christmas in April by Herb Sheppard

On Saturday April 24th volunteers from the United Parish of Bowie converged on a small home in Mitchelville to assist an elderly couple with needed repairs. As usual everyone pitched in and took possession of their chosen task. Deepa H., Michel D., Gene and Jan B., Rebecca and Connor G., Herb S., Judy F. and Tom C. worked on painting railings and three rooms, rebuilding back steps, general clean up and yard work, and laying new tile in two rooms. Pastor Dan stopped by for the perfunctory review and encouragement of our contingent.

This years assignment had an unusual twist in that the day before we were to arrive at our assignment the county contact called and said the original location had been disqualified as the homeowner had not revealed the fact the home was going to foreclosure in less than a month. Thankfully the county was able to come up with another venue so that

Christmas in April came off without interruption! Thanks to everyone for another successful



outing of service to the community by the United Parish of Bowie!

See you next year!

Sarajini Orphanage Trust Inc. (SOTI) Update by Nikki and Josi Hillary

Given the recent economic downturn, fundraising for a non-profit organization like SOTI is a major challenge. Despite this reality, SOTI's support in 2009 allowed eight poor students from India and Indonesia to continue their professional studies.

SOTI assists poor and handicapped students in India. Simultaneously, its focus in Indonesia is to support the training of young women in Nursing. These nursing skills will allow preventive health measures to be introduced to poor Islanders.

With SOTI's help in 2007, Florence,



received a graduate degree in Nursing in India. After working in a rural Indian hospital, she

recently married and became a mother.

Shalini, a legally blind student received a Bachelor's, and eventually a Master's degree in Education in 2009. She taught the children of Indian Missionaries for a year, and then joined a public school. She is an inspirational example, as one who has overcome genetic blindness and parental loss, yet has shown the determination to become an excellent teacher.

Kurniawati received an English teaching degree in 2009, and began teaching in a remote Indonesian school. This is significant, given the tremendous shortage of English teachers in poor, rural areas of the country.

Selva, a polio victim and son of a fisherman, will complete his Indian MBA studies this year. SOTI's financial support has helped him

academically excel, despite his physical handicap.

Within the current pipeline, two students will receive their Nursing degrees in 2011. Another will graduate with an Electrical Engineering degree.

Looking ahead, SOTI will sponsor Seriba, a legally blind Indian seeking an undergraduate Teaching degree.

Like Shalini, this young woman will be mentored by a retired Principal of a Women's Christian College.

These students all regard the SOTI financial support as a blessing from God. Similarly, we are grateful to the UPB congregation for providing dedicated support, which helped SOTI survive the turbulent period and continue its mission to help educate underprivileged youth.

A Letter from UPB Youth Mission Team

Dear United Parish of Bowie Members and Friends,

This summer we have an exciting opportunity to go on a mission trip with our church and we are asking for your help to make it happen. It may seem that the struggles of extreme poverty are somewhere far away, but in fact, many people struggle to survive even here in America. They are in desperate need of help, and all it takes is a little effort and commitment from people more fortunate, like us. Our youth group is planning a service trip to Gary, West Virginia, to build and repair houses, and in doing so, we hope to grow profoundly in our faith. To complete the project, the group will need to raise approximately \$4000. So we are asking you for two things: first, please pray for our Youth Mission Team often as we prepare for the mission, especially from July 18-23 as we venture on our journey, hoping to enhance the living conditions of the people we serve and grow on our own spiritual journey as well; second, we humbly ask you for a donation to our cause. Whatever you can give would be helpful and any donation you make will be fully tax deductible. Please earmark checks to UPB for Youth Mission and place them in the offering plate or mail them to the church. Please plan to attend our Commissioning during the worship service on July 18th and the Youth Led Sunday on August 8th where we will share some of the reflections from our experience.



Thank you for your prayers and support,

The UPB Youth Mission Team

Children, Youth, and Families

The 2009 to 2010 program year has been wonderful for children, youth, and families at UPB. From the Nursery to Sunday School to Youth Group to all church events and activities, the younger members of our congregation have been welcomed, loved, and raised in faith. Thank you to everyone for your ongoing support and prayers!



UPB Spring Babies



Emma Grace Bickel
Born May 12, 2010
8 lbs 6 oz, 19 3/4 in.



Benjamin James Holland
Born April 9, 2010
9 lbs 6 oz, 21 in.

Summer 2010

Summer Sunday Worship

June ~ 11 am

July & August ~ 10 am



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Youth Mission Commissioning - July 18th

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The United Parish of Bowie

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Address Correction Requested