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UNITED PARISH OF BOWIE

United in Christ - Our Mission: To Serve

May 24th was Pentecost. It was on Pentecost that the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2). They were baptized by the Holy Spirit and Peter preached his first sermon, urging the crowds to repent, to believe the good news of Jesus Christ and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The scriptures tell us that about 3,000 people were baptized and became the people of God on that day. It is this day that we celebrate the Church being born.

What is striking to me about these events is that before the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they didn't really do much. They talked, they waited, and they managed to fit in some fishing. It really doesn't sound very disciple like, does it? But after.... After they were filled with the Holy Spirit, after they became the Church, the disciples became "doers". The disciples start to do stuff. They start preaching, they start baptizing, they start healing, they start creating churches, they start building the Body of Christ.



This is important to remember. We, as the Church, are called to do more than just come to worship on Sunday. We, as the Body of Christ, are called to continue the ministry of Christ. We are called to share the Good News. We are called to embody God's love. We are called to reach out to the poor and needy. We are called to take time for fellowship with friends and to celebrate people's joys with them. Above all, we are called to worship and glorify God. This seems like a high calling because it is. However, the Pentecost story reminds us that we do not do it on our own. Catholic Saint Teresa of Avila summarized this when she wrote:

Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands but yours,
no feet but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which
Christ's compassion must look out on the world.
Yours are the feet with which
He is to go about doing good.
Yours are the hands with which
He is to bless us now.

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We are called to be doers, and this is what we, as the Church, as the Body of Christ are called to do. This may seem like a tough task and there is a very good reason for that – it is. However, the story of Pentecost should bring us comfort. We are called to be “doers” for Christ, but it is not something we undertake on our own. We are given help. Not only do we have our fellow believers, our brothers and sisters in Christ to help us, we have also been given the Holy Spirit. It is that Holy Spirit that unites us as the Body of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit that turns us into “doers”. As we celebrate Pentecost and the giving of the Holy Spirit, it is a perfect time to ask ourselves – how is God calling us to be “doers”? What is the Holy Spirit helping us to do?

- Pastor Chris



Christmas in April

Living out “our mission to serve,” fifteen members of UPB partnered with Trinity Church of Upper Marlboro for another successful Christmas in April. On Saturday, April 25th, UPB worked tirelessly on a cluttered home in District Heights, Maryland. At least five dump truck loads of furnishings and trash were hauled away during the day. Cleanup and yard work took place outside. A leaky toilet was repaired as well. The homeowner and her teenage son were very grateful for the work performed.



Thanks to Alec and Robin Burgess, Chris and Heather Deacon, Terry and Joey Drown and their granddaughter Cecilia Branche, Carlson Igwacho and his mom, Sudha and Deepa Hillary, Judy Farrell and her son Conor, Cathie Lambert, and Herb Sheppard. See you again next year!



A Look Back at Spring 2015





Summer will be here soon. Often we think of summer as a time to slow down, but we have a lot of exciting things coming up at UPB this summer. Our mission at UPB is to serve and this summer will offer many opportunities. June 6th, we will have an opportunity to serve our community at Bowiefest. If you think, as I do, that we have something special to offer our community, this is our opportunity to share it with our friends and neighbors. June 24th, we have the opportunity to serve God when we host the Watoto Children's Choir.

Children from Uganda will come and share their faith and their gift of music with us. The performance will be at 7:00, be sure to mark your calendars!

In July, we have an opportunity to serve our brothers and sisters with the Mars Hill mission trip. July 12th – 18th, a group from our church will join Christ Memorial church from Columbia, MD and Shadyside Presbyterian from Pittsburgh in heading to Madison County, North Carolina. We will work on housing repairs for low income people. July 27th-31st we will have our Art and Music camp. This is an opportunity to serve the children of our community as we share the Gospel through arts, crafts, music, and games.

Christ taught that the two greatest commandments are to love God and love our neighbor. Our mission is to serve. We seek to serve God, each other, and our neighbors. This summer will offer several opportunities. If you are interested in any of these opportunities or have other ideas how to serve, please see Pastor Chris.

BOWIEFEST: Share, Care, Experience



The United Parish of Bowie will participate in the annual Bowiefest celebration on Saturday, June 6th from 11AM-6PM at Allen Pond Park. Bowiefest is an annual celebration of community that brings the best of civic organizations, entertainers, businesses, and food vendors to one place for one day. Bowiefest celebrates the City of Bowie and its residents and showcases why Bowie has earned its reputation as a preferred hometown for so many people.

We need volunteers for a number of tasks and duties, which include but are not limited to: set-up, clean-up, children's activities, arts and crafts, outreach, and just plain hanging out and

pitching in where necessary. All ages are welcome. Parents and children are invited to sign up at UPB for shifts.

Since Bowiefest attendance is anticipated to be in the thousands, no vehicle traffic will be allowed on the park pathways. Festival attendees are requested to park in the Park and Ride lot on Northview Drive. The lot is near the Northview Drive/Route 197 intersection, just north of the Regal Cinemas parking lot. Shuttle buses will provide two-way transportation between the lot and Allen Pond every twenty minutes.

Please come out and support UPB, your community, and the people that make Bowie a special place.

Watoto Children's Choir

We will once again host the Watoto Children's Choir on Wednesday, June 24th at 7:00 pm. The concert is free, with a free will offering collected for the children.

With its genuine appeal accompanied by an energetic fusion of contemporary gospel and traditional African rhythm music and dance, the Watoto Children's Choir has traveled internationally since 1994 as ambassadors for African children orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS, war poverty and disease.

The Watoto Church seeks to develop the next generation of African leaders, by pursuing excellence in academic skills, integrity in conduct and moral values, in order to become a responsible Christian and productive citizen. Accompanied by a team of adults, the choir presents the church's vision and mission through their stories, music and dance. Watoto choir members act as ambassadors to raise awareness about the plight of the orphaned and vulnerable children of Africa.



Each child in the choir has suffered the loss

of one or both parents. The choir experience broadens the children's worldview by giving them exposure to other cultures. It also gives them the confidence and boldness to help them rise up from their own situations of sadness and despair.

Issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, the effects of war and the child soldier crisis in Northern Uganda are highlighted. The choirs have toured Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Australasia, Canada, UK, Germany, France, USA, South America, Hong Kong, China and Japan.

Their audiences have included princes and paupers, warming every heart along the way. Please join us for an evening that is sure to enlighten and inspire. Contact the United Parish of Bowie at 301-249-6411 for more information.

Board Corner

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.

In the past few months, the Board has been at work in several different areas including:

- Approving the change of Board meetings from the second Tuesday of the month to the first Tuesday of the month, effective in June.
- Passing our records review by Presbytery thanks to Walter's diligence and hard work.
- Completing work on the Becky DeMeo Memorial Garden. A dedication date will be announced when it is confirmed with the family.
- Receiving reports from the following committees:
 - ♣ Communications – Plans are coming along for Bowiefest on June 6; work is being done on updating our web page.
 - ♣ Ministry Support – New HVAC in day care wing is working; will be getting estimates for the rest of the building.
 - ♣ Children, Youth, and Family – CYF hosted a dinner/discussion for families on May 3; Art & Music Camp will be July 27-31; the youth will be participating in a service project to fill Summer Fun Buckets for the Bowie Food Pantry.
 - ♣ Membership and Fellowship – Ladies Night Out has been going well with everyone enjoying trying out different restaurants. Thanks to Joey for coordinating each month.
 - ♣ Christian Spiritual Formation – Received overall positive feedback on Lenten programs; Watoto will be in concert on June 24. Thanks to all the families who have agreed to host.
 - ♣ Missions and Service – Chris will be contacting Stop Hunger Now to schedule a date.



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.



Summer Fun Buckets

Following worship on June 14th, the children and youth will be assembling “Summer Fun Buckets”. These buckets will be filled with all sorts of fun summer items for the children whose families are serviced by the Bowie Food Pantry. With your help, we will be able to deliver at least 15 buckets on June 26th. There is a list of suggested items in the narthex. We will need all items by Sunday, June 7th. Thanks in advance for helping with this children and youth service project.

SEEDS

We all had a great time in SEEDS this year. Many discussions focused on how God is always with us. We began in the fall talking about change and how the thought of change can make us feel a little scared and uncomfortable. However, in reading Psalm 118:24, Deuteronomy 31:6, and Romans 8:38-39, we found that no matter what, God is always with us, even through all the changes in our lives.

In Winter SEEDS we thought about some of the 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 with us and working in us. ***“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”*** (Hebrews 11:1)

Pumpkin painting in the fall and making stained glass valentines in the winter gave everyone a chance to express their creativity.

Spring SEEDS was playing chimes. Everyone – children and adults – had fun learning to play “God is So Good” to share with the congregation on Mother’s Day. Our final SEEDS was a picnic – good food, fellowship, and fun water games lead by Pastor Chris.

The SEEDS team would like to thank all those who participated this year: children, youth, parents, leaders. Thanks to Elsie Carroll and Roy Eades for help with set-up and clean-up. Thanks to the Bickels, Christophers, Deacons, Munnellys, Snyders, Traftons, Settles, Sheppards, and Yates-Gregorys for help with the meals. And a special thank you to the Drowns who coordinated the meals each week!! All of you are an important part of this ministry!! We are looking forward to the fall, and finding new and exciting ways to help our children, youth, and families grow in their faith. If you have any great ideas, or feel called to be a part of this powerful ministry, please see Diane or Sue.





Art & Music Camp 2015

Plans are being made for United Parish of Bowie's fifth annual Art & Music Camp, a half day fun-filled faith based camp for preschoolers through fifth grade. This year, camp will be July 27-31, and our theme is "Camp Discovery: Jesus at Work Through Us". Children will rotate through stations of art, music, games, and drama as they explore how Jesus is at work in and through us, giving His love for us to share with others. We'll make some crafts that will reinforce the daily message, sing some old and new songs, play lots of fun games, and use drama to help Bible stories come alive.

If you would like to be part of helping children grow in their faith, please talk to either Diane or Sue. We are still looking for volunteers. There is something for everyone to do! In addition, please plan to attend worship on August 2 when children will share some of what they learned.

Flyers and registration forms are available in the narthex. Pick up a few and pass it along to friends and neighbors.



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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.