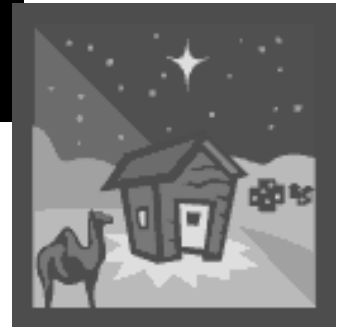


# United Parish of Bowie

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

WINTER 09-10  
NEWSLETTER



## **An Advent Reflection—by Rev. Dan Holland**

As a kid, Advent always seemed like an excruciatingly long wait... four weeks, opening up one little window per day on the advent calendar, counting down the days, hoping and expecting the one day that was almost magical because it was so special... Advent has always been a time of waiting and preparing. On the one hand it's become a time to prepare for Christmas in the cultural sense: there are plans to make, goodies to bake and parties to attend; there are decorations to hang, shopping to do, presents to buy and wrap... But on the other hand, it is, as it has been for many hundreds of years, time to prepare for Christmas in deeper sense too. The word "advent" comes from the Latin phrase "ad venio" which literally means "for the coming"—and that's why we wait.

The gospel of Luke positions the Savior's entrance into the world in the midst of a census to tax the people of the Roman Empire and yet it happened so quietly within the walls of history. He came in humility to an unwed mother, he was born in the barrenness of a smelly stable. Luke broadens the story to include nearby fields where an angel appeared out of the heavens, stood among shepherds watching over their flocks and proclaimed that this humble birth was good news for all people. As the radiant glory of God surrounded the angel, an obscure field in the middle of ancient Palestine was transformed into holy ground because this was the site of the announcement of the Advent of our Lord. It was a special night; the wait was over... the world was to be re-formed.

Dr. Kenneth Bailey, a Middle Eastern New Testament scholar, has written that, "At the manger in Bethlehem, history and mystery, event and interpretation, hearing and telling, remembering and reciting all come together in a unique way as we participate in the re-formation of who we are and our relationship to the world. Indeed—it's all about incarnation." Each advent season, as Christians, we are invited to prepare our hearts and we are called to remember that it's not just the birth of a baby that we celebrate. It's the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. We're called to consider again how that event and other events of his life influence the re-formation of our faith, our lives, our values and our priorities. Like the shepherds who first received word of the Savior's arrival and went "with haste" to see him, we are invited during this season to remember the birth of the helpless child; to ponder what it means when we say that God entered into the history of the world as one of us; to look with fresh eyes of faith and see history and mystery woven together in the love of the blessed one who throughout his life emptied himself for us; to hear with fresh ears the choirs of angels, still calling the world to peace as they sing "Glory to God in the highest heavens and on earth peace among those whom God favors."

So as we wait this Advent season, in the midst of the cultural preparations, don't forget to also prepare your heart for the coming. The Lord who once came into human history in a specific time and place to re-form the world can (and does and will) come into our lives to re-form them as well.

Wishing you a Blessed Advent Season and a Merry Christmas,

Pastor Dan

**United Parish of Bowie - 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie 20716**  
**www.unitedparishbowie.org - upbannounce@gmail.com - 301-249-6411**





**Come Join Us**

# **FESTIVAL of CAROLS**

A traditional Lessons and Carols service written by Joseph Martin.

This compelling and exciting work references over 20 carols in delivering the message of redemption and the birth of God's promised Son.

**SUNDAY, DEC. 20 at 11:00AM**

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**CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE**

**Thursday, Dec. 24 at 7:30PM**

**United Parish of Bowle**  
*United in Christ - Our Mission: To Serve*  
 Presbyterian Church (USA) -  
 United Church of Christ  
 Mitchellville & Mt. Oak Rds., Bowie, MD  
<http://www.unitedparishbowie.org/>



## **Board Corner by Board Member Tanya Asman**

### Administratively Speaking:

- Budget 2010! We've begun to ask committee chairs for budget input. In an effort to be good stewards Will Busch is kindly assisting Roy in preparing reports in QuickBooks that will compare on-going expenses to budget figures.
- A nominating committee for new Board members was established
- We are exploring the possibility of reformatting how committees are done at UPB, and have had favorable responses from committee chairs thus far.
- Other discussions included sanctuary/church use by outside organizations including Lifeline, and the Oak Pond HOA; purchase of a fire-proof filing cabinet; and obtaining an emergency resuscitation device, aka an AED.

### Spiritually Speaking:

- We allocated funds to purchase a new wheelchair for a member in need, and to make available a small amount of direct assistance to neighbors in need.
- We are debating the merits of participating in a pilot program of the National Capital Presbytery aimed at incorporating a spiritual development segment in Board meetings rather than focusing solely on administrative issues.
- We discussed the possibility of a summer mission project.

## Winter Fellowship Events

There are a lot of opportunities for fellowship at the United Parish this Winter. Please mark your calendars and get excited!

### Deck the Halls!

Have fun while decorating UPB for Advent & Christmas on Saturday December 12th from 9 am until Done.

**Chat & Chew:** A time of food and fellowship after worship the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. Bring food to share (A to G, 2nd Sun., H to Z, 4th Sun)

**Men's Breakfast:** A gathering of UPB Men the 1st and 3rd Tues. of the month at 7:30am at Bowie Bob Evans.



Enjoying Chat & Chew

**UPB Book Club:** A gathering of new and old friends to enjoy food and good conversation on the 1st Friday of the month:

-*Dec 4th:* Garlic and Sapphires by Ruth Reichl, to be held at Diane Eades home.

-*Jan 8th:* Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortensen.

-*Feb 5th:* Killer Angels by Michael Shaara.

## Advent Class

We will be exploring new and old traditions of Advent and Christmas in an interactive, hands on class for all ages during the Advent Sundays 10 am Education Hour.

Join us on November 29th, December 6th, December 13th, and December 20th as we celebrate the season together. Fun for the whole family. Breakfast treats and coffee will be provided! Come as you are able to one or all of the classes. Nursery care provided for young children.

## Baptisms

It was a joy to celebrate the baptism of Cora Anne Hines on October 18th and Katherine Ann Bickel on November 1st.



Kate and the rest of The Bickel Family

## New Members

UPB welcomed six new members this Fall 2009. Please introduce yourself and welcome them to the church family:

Nancy Brzozowski  
Mitch and Amy Fuqua  
Rebecca Holland  
Violet Igwacho  
Joseph Igwacho



New Members

## A Poem: New Birth by Shirley Klotz Bickel

We spin our fragile webs,  
ensnared by our own patterns.  
Perhaps a pelting summer rain,  
or swirling, icy wind  
will stretch then tear us loose.

Silently like a severed web  
making its way to earth  
we try to hold onto someone  
or something that lasts.

Torn by our struggles  
the Master Weaver descends  
from heaven to earth, then  
hell and back.  
Through costly love and sacrifice  
He transforms our spinning,  
untangles our torn strands,  
to birth in us a shining worth and  
purpose that transcends.

## Looking Forward in Leadership

By Pastor Dan Holland

In the last year, one of the things that has come up repeatedly in leadership meetings and visioning for the future, is that it would be helpful for the future and growth of the United Parish to clarify how things get done and to make getting involved in the ministry of the congregation more easily accessible for newcomers. To that end we've been discussing ideas at the board and with committee leadership and we're considering adding a layer of organization that would serve to clarify lines of communication and responsibility, create unity among similar groups within the church and decrease duplication of efforts. We're interested in hearing feedback from anyone who's interested in giving it.

### Stewardship Campaign

by Josi Hillary, Campaign Chair

Our campaign that started on October 11, 2009 and ended with a celebration Lunch on November 1, 2009 resulted in 28 pledges for an amount of \$119,570. Based on our past experience, we anticipate eight more pledges or support for another \$8,924. We experienced a modest increase in pledges compared to the previous year.

Our theme for the campaign was based on our mission and our aspirations. *If you have not turned in your 2010 pledge, it's not too late! Please get it to UPB.*

Right now we have lots of committed people engaged in wonderful hands on ministry. But we don't have many places where long range planning, discernment, visioning, goal setting and evaluation are going on. As we brainstormed possibilities the idea emerged that we could have committees exist to discern God's lead for specific areas of the church, to pray, to vision, to evaluate, and to facilitate communication and connection between the teams that are actually doing the hands-on ministry (what we now call committees). If you'd like to be involved in this exciting process, please give me a call or send me an email! Thanks!



The Fall 2009 Leadership Retreat

## Adult Education

We enjoyed a wonderful Fall Adult Education course on the *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster. Thank you to all who taught on a discipline.

Don't miss the Adult Ed. Breakfast on Sunday, January 10th at 10 am where we will hear about the Winter Class offerings and enjoy good food together.



Adult Education

## Announcing Pastor Howell's New Position

By Steve Howell, UPB's Interim Pastor 2006-2008



Steve and Sheri

Steve Howell is now serving with Dynamic Church Planting International (DCPI). DCPI is a training organization that trains Church Planters around the world. Their

training has been provided in over 83 Countries and over 72,000 churches have been started by those who have received this training.

Steve has two roles with DCPI. He

serves as a Master Trainer and in this position will help to train leaders to plant churches worldwide. He also serves as Mid-Atlantic Regional Ambassador with DCPI and will be sharing the vision and mission of DCPI with donors and church leaders to raise the funds to train leaders worldwide.

Steve asks his UPB family for prayers as he serves in this new position and for the training he will be giving at a Church Planting Conference in Albany, New York in December.



## UPB Choir

The UPB Choir is looking for new recruits! Please think about joining the fun. All abilities are welcome. Rehearsals take place Wednesdays at 7:30 pm in the sanctuary. Please talk with choir director, Diane Eades if you are interested.

*We want to hear from you!*  
*Please send all announcements,*  
*photos, and articles to*  
*upbannounce@gmail.com .*  
*Spring Newsletter Deadline:*  
*Sunday, February 7th..*

## Prayer Group

Inspired by the large interest in the Spring Prayer Course, the UPB Prayer group has been, meeting the fourth Tuesday of each month for a time of prayer at 7:30 pm in the Holland home. Upcoming meetings 1/26 and 2/23. No Meeting in December. Contact Rebecca Holland.

## Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

### Rally Day

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Rally Day preparations and fun. We had a wonderful 1st Annual kick off to our program year and look forward to next year's festivities. Thank you!

### Fall Clean Up Day

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Fall Clean Up Day! We were able to get many projects taken care of both inside and outside the church. Thank you!

### Consecration Sunday

Thank you to everyone who provided an amazing meal for our celebration luncheon, as well as to

those who helped set up and clean up the fun. Thank you!

### Chat & Chew

Thank you to everyone who continues to bring in treats to share for our 2nd and 4th Sunday Chat & Chew after worship. Thank you!

### Volunteers

Thank you to everyone who gives their time and talents in making UPB a wonderful place to be. Whether you serve in leadership, sing in the choir, teach adult ed or Sunday School, work behind the scenes, or pray for the ministries, you are appreciated!



The Consecration Sunday Feast

### Want to Get Involved?

There are a variety of ways to get involved at UPB! Talk with Pastor Dan Holland to find out more!

## UPB Local Service Projects by Community Service Chair Nancy Snyder

### Bowie Food Pantry

We are definitely making more frequent trips to the Bowie Pantry with non-perishable goods, and that is a good thing! This is a hard year for many families in the area. *Please continue to bring in your donations to our box in the narthex.*

### Family Crisis Center

The Crisis Center meals have looked especially tasty also. Last Sunday we got a glimpse of their new dining area, and it had a number of women sitting in the sunny and spacious room. Women

were also visiting on the porch. It seemed like a welcoming refuge for these women and children in need of some caring help. The visible autumn decorated cupcakes made quite an impression. *Please continue to sign up to donate items for the meal we provide the 3rd Sunday of every month.*

### Christmas Children's Gift Bags

The tabs for the children's gift bags have all been snapped up. These five children we took on appear to belong to a single family. I hope they can use and enjoy all our

selections. These bags are due on the 29th.

### Warm Nights

We have taken on Monday, December 14th to provide (and possibly serve) our famous crock-pot chili and cornbread dinner for the Warm Nights residents of All Saints Lutheran Church. This is the first time they have provided shelter, and they are having a meeting on December 2 at 7 pm .

Thanks to all of you who are making these activities possible!

## Elementary Kids Sunday School Class by Children's Director Nikki Hillary

*Our elementary kids Sunday school class attends the beginning of the worship service before heading to their classroom where they participate in the exciting Power Express curriculum.*

This class completed a successful rotation of "Abraham and Sarah" lessons. Many members of the church helped out in a variety of ways. Some set up a display in the class room featuring a crude tent with a man, woman, camel, lamb and other miscellaneous items. Some taught lessons on topics they love and have expertise in. Others served as shepherds and assisted the teachers. Some others helped in yet another interesting way. They dressed in "Abrahamic" costumes and dropped in the class for quick visits. This has certainly been a team effort to teach the children about God and God's people.

The teachers planned kid-friendly lessons well ahead of time using techniques and tips (given in the lesson plan). They also made use of digital resources and teaching aids. We, the teachers were impressed with the amount of knowledge and understanding the kids gained. It is our hope that the children will carry with them lasting memories of Abraham and Sarah for life.

In the **Art class**, **Judy Farrell** talked about God's promise to Abraham and Abraham's journey from Ur to Haran and

then to Canaan. The children made journey sticks with journey circles, a kind of stick that Abraham might have used while journeying for days together on the ragged terrain of the land.

In the **Storytelling class**, **Pearl Donovan** taught about everyday life in the desert and how hospitable they were to strangers. The kids read Genesis passages from the Bible, watched video clips, and tasted home-made bread and cheese. They also had a surprise visit from "Sarah" and



Elementary Kids Sunday School Class

"Abraham" (Tanya A and Robby M) who shared with them their journey experiences.

In the **computer class**, **Gene Barbato** reviewed the story and showed video clips of the journey. Later, the children took part in computer games that tested their knowledge of the lesson and helped them recognize the countries as they existed then and what they are called now. The children had a visit from "Abraham's neighbor" (Robby M) who was unhappy about Abraham's move from Ur.

In the **Cookery class**, **Kathy Busch** discussed Abraham's life, what they ate, what they grew and how they were hospitable to strangers. The children realized that the life was hard and people had to grow the food they ate. The children sampled bread with raisins and cheese, also grape juice.

In the **Science class**, **Mike Mehl** discussed why Abraham and company went along the river instead of across the desert. Then the children made "table tents" to show how they built their homes to stay cooler and how they worked together while building the tents.

In the **Games class**, **Will Busch** took the children on a real journey to give them an appreciation for what Abraham and his company would have experienced when they travelled. They looked for sources of food and water as they walked and carried food in sacks. It was an adventure!

In the **Music class**, **Janice Sheppard** helped the children make music and rhythm instruments using blocks of wood, sand paper, and empty bottles. The children then played the instruments to music and marched around the room.

In the **last class**, **Nikki Hillary** reviewed the entire lesson. The children learned the names of well-known people of the Bible who descended from Abraham. They learned that they too belong to Abraham's family. So, they made self-portraits and added those to the Abraham's chart on the wall.

## Nursery Fun and Games

*Our wonderful nursery provides care for young children, from birth to preschool age, during the 10am Adult Education Hour as well as during the 11 am worship service.*

The UPB babies and young children have had a wonderful fall season. Children love the bright room, variety of toys, and fantastic nursery team.



The UPB Nursery Kids

## UPB Youth Group



UPB Youth Fall Service Project

*Our youth group, with students in 6th to 12th grade, meets after worship the 1st and 3rd Sundays of*

*the month. On the 1st Sunday, they head out for a fun event or a service project. On the 3rd Sunday they enjoy lunch together as they dive into youth group fun and faith.*

This Fall the youth put together 16 boxes to go to children in need through their service project Operation Christmas Child. Thank you for supporting our youth through your participation in their service project. Thank you also to those who have provided delicious lunches for our youth to enjoy before they meet on Sundays!

## UPB Families

### Fun Family Playdates

UPB Families enjoyed several Fall Playdates after church - including picnics, walks to the local park, and a fall art project. The playdates were a great opportunity for kids and parents to have fun and get to know each other better. Watch for the winter and spring playdates!

### Successful Parents Meeting

The Children's Ministry held a Fall Parents meeting to provide an opportunity for parents, teachers, and committee members to get to know each other and talk about the wonderful programs offered for children at UPB!

## Younger Kids Sunday School Class

*Our younger kids Sunday school class, with kids from preschool to kindergarten, meets during the 11 am worship service. The students participate in an interactive lesson from the Presbyterian Church Wee Believe curriculum.*

The children in this class were taught by Linda Hutchinson who was assisted by Rebecca Holland.



Younger Kids Sunday School - Planting Seeds

The teachers used a number of interesting teaching aids and hands-on activities including painting when they taught the children about the God's Creation, Moses, and the ten commandments.

Linda even built a model of the Red Sea with blue construction paper and blocks to demonstrate to the kids how the sea parted and how the people crossed.

**Winter 09-10**

## **UPB Worship 11 am**

Nursery Care Available for Infants and Young Children  
Sunday School Available for Preschool to Elementary Children

### **Advent Opportunities**

Advent Worship Services - Sun 11 am - 11/29, 12/6, 12/13, 12/20  
Advent Celebrations Class - Sun 10 am - 11/29, 12/6, 12/13, 12/20  
Festival of Carols - Sunday December 20th at 11 am  
Christmas Eve Worship Service - Thursday Dec 24th at 7:30 pm

**United Parish of Bowie - 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie 20716**  
**[www.unitedparishbowie.org](http://www.unitedparishbowie.org) - [upbannounce@gmail.com](mailto:upbannounce@gmail.com) - 301-249-6411**

### **Report on the Recent Pastoral Evaluation by Doug Snyder**

During the summer, the Ministry Review Committee conducted an initial evaluation of Rev. Dan Holland, as specified in his contract. Using an existing questionnaire, modified for our needs by Merrill Hathaway and myself, surveys were mailed to fifteen randomly-selected members--three on the Parish Board and twelve at large. Thirteen surveys were returned and analyzed. Respondents rated importance and pastor effectiveness with respect to five areas on a four point scale. The areas and the average effectiveness ratings of our pastor were: Preaching and Worship, 3.62; Pastoral Care and Ministry, 3.73; Evangelism, Outreach, Service, 3.56; Administration and Organization, 3.64; and Personal Characteristics, 3.83. The importance ratings for the areas were strongly related to their respective pastor effectiveness ratings. Future evaluations will be expanded to include the Board and the ministry of the congregation as a whole. The Committee thanks all who participated in the survey. The committee is composed of Doug Snyder (Chair), Sudha Hillary, Elsie Carroll, Herb Sheppard, and Dan Holland.