

United Parish of Bowie

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

WINTER 2011
NEWSLETTER



Family

I've been reading a book called *Saying Goodbye* that frames how a pastor's leaving might be a time of growth both for the pastor and for the congregation. In the book there's an essay that makes an analogy between a pastor's departure and an adult child making a transition—perhaps getting a job or getting married or something like that that calls them away. The essay is called: *Just When You Appreciate Them Most... They Leave Home!* It has a lot of food for thought for the United Parish and so I wanted to share a bit of it interspersed with a few of my thoughts:

"In a very real sense, the congregation interacts to support, encourage, and promote personal growth in much the same way family members relate to each other. When a new pastor arrives, we begin the process of assimilation. We tell tales of the collective past—the dreams we've achieved, and the failures we've had to swallow. We confess our needs and plan together the directions we'll take, both traditional and covering new ground. We learn to appreciate the strengths of our new leader, and we begin to fit together the puzzle of our shared lives in this place and at this new time."

I resonate with that process of assimilation and I will be forever grateful for the extent to which the people of the United Parish have welcomed my family into your family. And it may take a little time, but I trust that God is already working to call someone to be the next pastor of the United Parish and so at some point in the future the process of assimilation will happen again as you tell the family stories, share traditions and help someone else understand you. It's something to look forward to... And yet there may be some who aren't ready to look forward. Because:

"Without warning to most of us... Our leader [was] snatched—uprooted—from our congregational family, and many of us are devastated. The blow comes when all was going so well—new programs thriving, [and] wonderful new people coming into the fellowship... Nobody embraces loss eagerly; not one of us willingly watches a good friend depart. Yet we don't have a vote in this decision, just as we don't really have a say when those kids hear their distant drums... or fall in love... or find a perfect job in Australia."

In the last few weeks, we've all wrestled with emotions. There's been quite a bit of disappointment and sadness, some fear about what's coming next, and even a little anger has come my way. And all of that has been mixed together with gratitude for what is now, what has been over the last few years, and the direction that the congregation has been moving. With all of the mixed emotions, I appreciate the support you've shown as my family and I prepare for a long move. And I hope it's an encouragement that:

"When family members leave us, life does go on. There *is* life after high school, after college, after the kids are married and settled half a continent away..." and it may just be that my leaving shows that "The congregation is [an] extended family, whom we help, by whom we are cheered and encouraged, and with

Continued on page 2



Family, cont.

whom we share our tears and laughter. [You'll still be] here for each other. When pastors change—still the Home Place survives.”

The author goes on to talk about her specific church, which is very different than ours. But the sentiment she conveys is one worth taking to heart. One of the wonderful things about the United Parish is that you are a family... an amazing family. I was privileged to be a part of it for a while and I will always remember my time here fondly.

Thank you, and may God bless you richly now and always,
Pastor Dan

Board Corner

Dear Members and Friends of the United Parish,

Although we have all been experiencing a wide range of emotions since learning that Dan is leaving, we are grateful for God, the United Parish, and Dan's ministry the past three years. Under his leadership, guidance, and support, we have made positive changes in the way we are doing many things, and a number of new ministries have been established and are thriving. It is now important for all of the members and friends of UPB to make sure that we continue to grow and thrive as we go through the next few months and begin the search for a new pastor. It's going to be a challenging time for of us, but we trust that God is with us on this journey. Take comfort in the knowledge that His grace will see us through.

Over the next few months, we will begin the process of finding the right pastor to lead our church forward. The first step will be hiring a part time “Gap Pastor” whose responsibilities will include planning and leading worship and providing pastoral care as needed. The Parish Board is currently in the process of getting names of possible candidates from the National Capital Presbytery and the UCC. The “Gap Pastor” will also facilitate the process of calling an interim pastor. Once an interim is in place, we can begin the search for our permanent pastor. While this is not something we expected to be doing again so soon, it's important to remember that this time we are better prepared because we have the benefit of being more familiar with the process than we were the first time.

In the short term, we are happy to tell you that Steve Howell will be here to lead worship on Christmas Eve, as well as on December 25, and January 1. We are truly blessed to have a good friend back with us during this time.

The members of the board want you to know that if you have any questions, concerns, or needs that we can help you with in the upcoming months, please feel free to contact us. We also ask that you keep the United Parish in your prayers as we work together to build on UPB's past, and continue to move forward.

Peace and Blessings,

Dina Bickel
Kathy Busch
Elsie Carroll

Sudha Hillary
Sue Kennedy
Mike Mehl

Herb Sheppard
Penny Simpson
Walter Trafton

United Parish of Bowie: Fall 2011



Membership and Fellowship Committee

As always, we welcome input from members of the congregation about possible Fellowship activities. Watch the bulletin for an announcement of the next committee meeting if you would like to join us.

Lenten Dinner Series

The Membership and Fellowship Committee is looking forward to the upcoming Lenten Dinner Series, which will begin in February. If you are interested in serving on a team which will coordinate one of these dinners, please contact Marva C.

Book Club

The Book Club meets at 7pm at the Barbato's home. Contact Jan or Gene for more information.

Jan. 6th *The Leftovers*, Tom Perrotta (What would happen if The Rapture actually took place and millions of people just disappeared from the earth? How would normal people respond? The residents of Mapleton use a variety of coping mechanisms in this thought-provoking novel about love, connection, and loss.)

Feb. 3rd *The Warmth of Other Suns*, Isabel Wilkerson (A chronicle of one of the great untold stories of American history: the decades-long migration of black citizens who fled the South for northern and western cities, in search of a better life. From 1915 to 1970, this exodus of almost six million people changed the face of America.)

Mar. 6th *Moneyball: the Art of Winning an Unfair Game*, Michael Lewis

Apr. 13th *Isaac's Storm*, Erik Larson

May 4th *Sarah's Key*, Tatiana De Rosnay

June 1st *Unbroken*, Laura Hillenbrand **or** *Destiny of the Republic*, Candice Millard



Local Thanksgiving Worship Services

Thanksgiving Worship with Communion
All Saints Lutheran Church
Wed. Nov. 23rd at 7:30-8:30 pm

Annual Bowie Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve service
Temple Solel, 2901 Mitchellville Road
Wed. Nov. 23, at 7:30 pm

The theme of "Faith and Hope Respond to Economic Anxiety" will be addressed by members of the interfaith clergy group. An interfaith choir will sing, and an offering of staple goods and money will be taken for the Bowie Interfaith Food Pantry.

Ladies Night Out

All ladies are welcome to attend. See the listed coordinator if you would like to participate.

Dec. 2nd: Mormon Temple Festival of Lights -- Team Coordinator: Dina B.

Jan. 20th: Movie Night at Penny's -- Team Coordinator: Penny S.

Feb. 21st: Fat Tues. Pancake Supper -- Team Coordinator: Barbara T. & Elsie C.

March 23rd: Bowling -- Team Coordinator: Becky D.

April 21st: Visit Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA -- Team Coordinator: Jan B.

May 18th: Bocci Ball/Game Night -- Team Coordinator: Diane E.



Stewardship

The United Parish of Bowie's 2012 Stewardship Campaign concluded with our Consecration Sunday Celebration on Oct. 30th. Thank you to everyone who made a financial commitment to the work and ministries of the United Parish by returning your pledge cards. Your generous donations will help us move forward and use our gifts and talents as we participate in Christ's mission to the world.

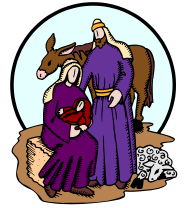
We had thirty-two families/individuals pledge \$115,700. This includes two new pledges and fourteen families /individual who increased their pledges over 2011. After estimating giving from those who were not able to be pledge on Consecration Sunday, we anticipate that we will receive almost \$132,000 to carry out our programs and ministries in 2012. This is about 2% less than what was pledged in 2011. If you have not yet pledged, you can still do so. Pledge cards are available in the narthex, or you can email your pledge to stewardship@unitedparishbowe.org. Shortly after Thanksgiving, those who pledged will be receiving a letter of acknowledgement.

Meeting of Potomac Association of the United Church of Christ (UCC)

Pastor Dan Holland and I attended the Fall meeting of the Association on October 22nd. Following the worship service, much of the remaining time was devoted to the consideration of an "Open and Affirming" Resolution, which was distributed at the Spring meeting. The principal sentence of the resolution originally read, "We embrace persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions." After considerable discussion, it was amended to read, "We embrace persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions; all races, ethnic groups, social classes, abilities, and physical appearance." The amended resolution passed overwhelming. This resolution is in no way binding upon local congregations, as is the case with all actions of United Church of Christ bodies.

-Doug Snyder

New Axis for Time



Dragging with newborn child
panting with each ascent
stripped of friends and family
turned away by those suspecting the worst
steadied by a man who finds it hard
to see where all this is leading.

No clean place to lie in
Bethlehem's town of strangers.
Resting goats inertly chew their cud.
Bleating mother nurses her lamb.
No midwife to keep watch,
only vision of holy imperative.
Such loneliness mingles with
nearness of God.
No angels make it easy.

Groans and screams, then startled
cries announce a new life.
Unruly joyous tears bathe
the baby's face.
Jesus child inhales relief
in mother's swaying arms,
hushed by father's astonished gaze.
Flies taunt the resting donkeys
who never bother to rise or kneel.
Such a Holy advent in
a lowly place births
hope for every trusting race.

Shirley Klotz Bickel
Voice of Many Waters, 1997, 2000

Spiritual Formation Opportunities

Meals, Memories and Music:



An Advent Celebration

*Do you love to eat?
Do you love to tell
stories? Do you love
to sing Christmas
carols?*

*Then you will love joining us on
Wednesdays: Nov. 30th, Dec. 7th and
Dec. 14th. All ages are welcome to our
Advent Celebration. Bring a potluck
dish to share. Bring a story about the
traditions you and your family have
during Advent and Christmas. Finally,
bring a list of Christmas hymns so we
can sing and help our children and
youth learn them! If you can't join us
for dinner, then come for the sharing
of stories and songs! Dinner will begin
at 6:00pm. Then at 6:40, we will begin
our sharing and singing until 7:15.
For more information or questions,
call Diane E. 410-798-6240.*

Get Published!

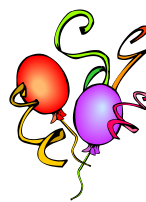
The deadline for the Spring 2012
UPB Newsletter is **February 1st**.
Please submit your committee
announcements, photos, articles, etc.
to upbannounce@gmail.com



Adult Education

The Adult Education Class has had a varied and interesting program, including weekly study of the lectionary and classes on the history and meaning of communion. The coming classes are also varied and should appeal to a wide number of participants, and it is hoped that many more will decide to come.

On December 4 and 11, the class will look at advent texts, and continue with lectionary-based text study, beginning January 8. In early February, we plan to invite guests from the Jewish and Islamic faiths to discuss their use of their holy texts. All classes begin at 9:45am.



96 years young!

We wish Bill McFarland a
very happy 96th birthday
and many more!



Children, Youth and Family



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

On December 18th, the children and youth will be presenting a Christmas play called Carriers of the Light during worship. There will even be a part for the congregation! Practices, which have already started, are at 9:45 on Sunday morning before worship. There will be a dress rehearsal at 12:10 on December 11th. Come and celebrate the joyous birth of Jesus through words and songs.



Sunday School

UPB Sunday School is off to a great start this year! Whether they are in the nursery, preschool/ kindergarten class, 1st to 4th grade class, or the 5th to 9th grade class, students are growing in faith as they have fun with their friends and teams of teachers.

Fall SEEDS

Fall Seeds was a wonderful experience for all the families and volunteers involved! Thank you for your ongoing support through your prayers, food, and more. Watch for information about the Winter SEEDS program starting in January!



Mission and Service Committee

If you have ideas or are interested in serving on the Mission and Service Committee, please contact Mary Jo Munnelly by email @ mjmunnelly@msn.com or phone @ 301-464-8430.



Rev Anne Troy, Executive Director, Shaw Community Ministry (SCM), was the guest preacher at UPB on October 2nd. She shared with us the mission of SCM and the support they provide to enhance the lives and expand the opportunities of children, youth, and adults of the Shaw community, in Washington, DC.

Shaw Community Ministry Thanksgiving Baskets

UPB's generous support of Shaw Community Ministry (SCM) allowed several families in the Shaw Community Ministry community to prepare and serve its own Thanksgiving meals. Each year for the past 20 years, SCM has provided 100-125 families with

food and gift cards around the Thanksgiving holiday. UPB collected 13 complete Thanksgiving Baskets and lots of extra non-perishables food items to support this wonderful ministry.

stew or hearty soup; February- spaghetti and meatballs; and March-pot roast/meat loaf! Please look for the sign-ups on the table in the narthex and remember what a blessing our meals are to the women and children at the Crisis Center!



Family Crisis Center-Themed Meals

The themed meals have been working out very well this fall! The Committee has selected themes and provided suggestions for the monthly meals. Since August, your generous support has provided the following themed meals: barbecue, tailgating, chili, and a Thanksgiving feast. The themes for the upcoming months are as follows: December-Christmas Dinner; January-beef

Operation Christmas Child (OCC)

UPB collected 17 shoe box gifts this year to help bring joy and hope to children in desperate situations worldwide and tell the Good News of God's love. Each child who receives a gift-filled shoe box is also offered "The Greatest Gift of All" booklet, which explains the story of Christ and salvation through Him. I was personally touched to learn that many of the children that received gift-filled

Mission and Service Committee, continued

shoe boxes as children are now missionaries delivering the shoe box gifts.

Please also pray that the shoe box gifts arrive at their destination safely and in a timely manner, and that God will touch the heart of every child who receives a shoe box gift.

Central Union Mission-Operation Christmas Miracle aka "Christmas Bag" Service Project is Back!

UPB participated by purchasing gifts for 10 needy and homeless children in the Washington, DC area for the 2011 Christmas gift distribution. Each child received one bible, one book, one game, and 3 toys. We also plan to attend the Christmas Bag distribution on Dec. 10th to see firsthand our impact on the children being sponsored.

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

Bowie Interfaith Pantry

Please continue to bring non-perishable food donations for the pantry and drop in basket in the Narthex. We are planning another food drive in February.

Family Crisis Center-Donated Phones

Donate your used or broken cell phones and chargers (box on table in Narthex). Through its partnership with the Verizon HopeLine, the Family Crisis Center can turn these items into cash to support their program.

Living Waters for the World (LWW)

Please help the children's Christian Education program with its service project to support the effort of LWW to bring clean drinking water to all God's children in poor and developing countries all around the world. Join the children in this worthwhile service project by depositing whatever amount (pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, or currency) you want to donate in the large water bottle in the area outside the sanctuary.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Donate to this special offering taken the first Sunday of each month.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

Warm Nights

UPB is planning to participate in Warm nights again this year. We will provide the meal (chili, cornbread, salad, and dessert) on designated night and share fellowship with the guests. The date has not yet been set.

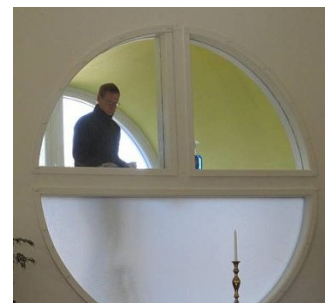
Bowie Interfaith Pantry Food Drive

The Bowie Food Pantry donations tend to slow down after the holidays. During the months of January and February, we will be supporting the Bowie Food Pantry with a coordinated food drive. The congregation will be invited to provide specific items each week. Look out for more information in the weekly bulletin announcements.



Church Decorating

All are welcome to help decorate the church for the Christmas season on Dec. 10th. If you have any greenery, please bring it with you. Thanks!



Winter 2011

Christmas Day Service: 11am
New Year's Day Service: 11am

UPB Children and Youth present:
Carriers of the Light
December 18, 2011 at 11am

.....
Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 2011 at 7:00 pm

All are welcome

*as we celebrate the birth of our Lord
and Saviour, Jesus Christ*



United Parish of Bowie - 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie, Maryland 20716

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The United Parish of Bowie
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Address Correction Requested