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UNITED PARISH OF BOWIE

United in Christ: Our Mission - To Serve

A message from Pastor Jeri...

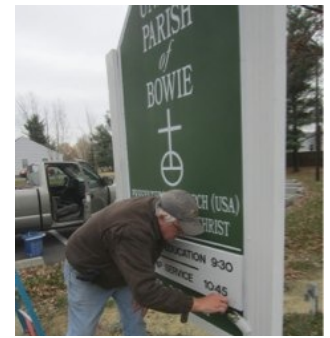
Those who serve on your Parish Board understand and accept the depth of responsibility and commitment that comes in serving as a Parish Board Member. As leaders, they strive to inspire and motivate people. As managers, they work to ensure the church's resources are managed effectively. Collectively, they use their God-given gifts and abilities to glorify God in all they do.

With responsibility comes accountability. Recognizing this, a Board Covenant has been developed and approved by your Parish Board. This has been a work in progress for over two years; and will now be made annually by each member of the Board.

I hope you will take the time to read the promises made by each Board Member to God; to you, their church family; and to each other, while serving on the Parish Board. May you keep them in your prayers, as they serve.

Grace and peace for the journey.

Rev. Jeri Fields, Interim Pastor



BOARD COVENANT

The Board is charged with responsibility for the money and property of the church and ensuring that the church is ethical in all its pursuits and dealings. Board Members are accountable for acting with personal honesty and integrity, including avoiding conflict of interest and any personal gain. Members are expected to bring vision, wisdom, and dedication to their duties. In doing so, Board Members will make the following promises:

Our Promise to God

Knowing that everything we do is through God, **we promise** to pray, both alone and together. **We promise** to thank God for all He has given us, including this time to serve His church. **We promise** to treat our time on the Board as an opportunity to make an important gift to our church. **We promise** to seek God's guidance and help in all we do.

Our Promises to Our Church Family

As leaders of our church, **we promise** to demonstrate our leadership by serving as role models through personal commitment and actions while being actively involved in the life of the church (for example: serving on a committee; supporting our church's ministries; participating in congregational activities and events). As spiritual

One heart. One voice.
United Parish,
REJOICE!

leaders, **we promise** to nurture our own spiritual growth through both education and regular worship, including special worship services.

Recognizing our responsibility to guide our church and set the church's mission, purpose, goals, and strategic direction, **we promise** to work collaboratively with clergy, staff, committees, and members of the congregation. **We promise** to listen to their needs and provide support in order to successfully implement congregational ministries.

Knowing and understanding that the Board works for the good of the United Parish of Bowie and does not represent any one interest, **we promise** to prayerfully discern what is best for our church.

Having been given the responsibility of making sure that our church's resources are being used effectively, we **promise** to engage in regular evaluation of our policies, programs, procedures, and personnel.

If at any time, as Board Members, we are unable to fulfill our responsibility to our church, **we promise** that we will offer our resignation.

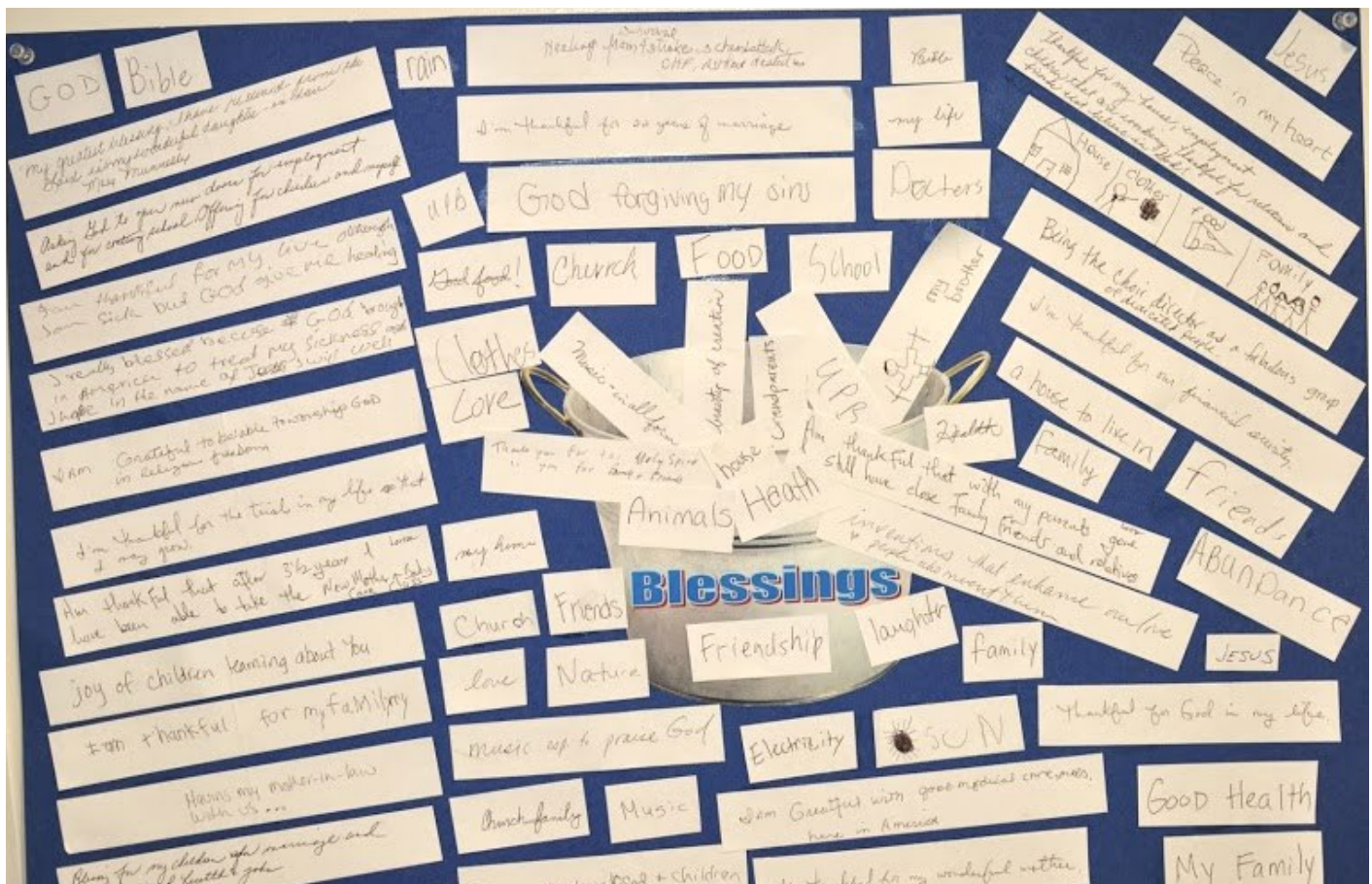
Our Promises to Each Other on the Parish Board

Knowing that our decisions will have an impact on the entire church, **we promise** to express ourselves as clearly and honestly as possible through open discussion and exchange of ideas in the Board meetings. And, **we promise** to listen to each other with an open, nonjudgmental mind.

Acting as one body, **we promise** to unequivocally respect the confidentiality and privacy of our discussions, deliberations, and disagreements, and to support all final decisions made by the Board, whether or not they reflect our own personal views.

At all times, **we promise** to respect and care for each other.

UPB's bucket is overflowing with...



Pastor Search

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) continues to meet weekly as we discern where God is leading us. Our Ministry Information Form was posted on the Church Leadership Connection, the Internet-based matching and referral system for the Presbyterian Church, on August 2. Since that time, we have received 80 Pastor Information Forms (PIFS) and have eliminated 64 candidates. The UCC Profile was posted on the UCC Listings of Churches on October 4. We have received 12 Candidate Profiles from UCC and have eliminated 3 candidates. We are still receiving new PIFS and UCC Profiles every week.

Working with two denominations can be a little challenging at times because the candidate information received from each denomination is not the same. Since we believe that it is important to initially evaluate each candidate based on the same information, we are sending the narratives from the Presbyterian PIF to all the UCC candidates. These are the basic steps that are being followed in evaluating candidates:

- Read and review the PIFS and UCC Profiles
- Listen to or watch a sermon or sermons
- Ask candidates to respond in writing to a set of questions on various aspects of their ministries
- Skype or telephone interview
- Call their references
- Conduct a second Skype or telephone interview
- Hold face-to-face interview/neutral pulpit after receiving approval from the denomination.

When a call has been offered and accepted, the candidate will be introduced to the congregation and will preach during worship. Following that service there will be a congregational meeting to vote on the terms of call.

Since the committee is being very intentional with evaluating each candidate, making sure that a consensus is reached before moving on, this process will take time. However, when a call is issued and accepted, we know it will be the person God is leading us to. Please continue to keep this dedicated group of people in your prayers as we discern who will be the next pastor of our church.



The Dilemma of Mary and Me

I have dreamed of making a family
with Joseph, my love.

Dare I believe the Spirit of our most High God
condescended to meet with me?

I live with my family, go to market,
cook, clean, and pray through the day.

My father taught me well about God's promise
to Abraham and all his descendants.

I am certainly a virgin. How can this be?

I must not bring shame to my father's name.

If I tell my father I am soon to conceive,
what will my dear father believe?

In my heart I know God's Spirit has come to me.

I can't imagine why He has chosen me.

I am but a helpmate to those who need me each
day.

My knees shake like a newborn lamb.

Can a virgin give birth? What is happening to
me?

Gabriel said I will bear the very Son of God?

Have I lost my mind?

The angel said, "There is nothing God cannot
do."

Tears of fright shine my eyes.

"God of my ancestors, God of my family,
King of my heart, take my hands and all of me.

May it happen to me as you command."

But I am not Mary.

Yet the God of my ancestry hounds even me
to give Him the love of my heart,
let this kingly Son come, make His home in me.

Shirley Klotz Bickel, C. 2013



Communications

Such a fabulous time of year! Many of the days are still warm, the nights are cool, the incredible colors and sounds of Autumn, extra times to gather with family and friends – what's not to like? Well sure the days are getting colder and shorter, it is possible we might have forgotten to test the heating system before we really needed it and got blasted with a year's worth of ductwork dust; but on balance, it is still my very favorite time of the year (although please remind me to have the HVAC system checked at the end of next summer). This also marks the end (or marked the end, depending on how fast I type and how quickly you read) of the Silent UPB Pen Swap (again insert the Mission Impossible theme here) contest. Winners will be announced soon, so stay tuned.

Over the last six months or so we have seen many successful examples of cross functional teams who take on the responsibility for an event, by blending the

resources of more than one committee as well as individuals who have not yet committed to committee service. Probably our biggest example of that was the UPB pavilion at BowieFest (and we will need to start planning for this year's foray right after the holidays). Our next teaming event will be the Greening of the Church December 14 and we hope to see you there. For those who have enjoyed the years of traditional decorations led by Dot and Becky and want to see them continue, please come. For those who are looking for ways to involve their whole family in decorating, please come. For those with allergies, please come as last year we began to change from predominantly live greens and plants to more of a mix of live and reusable decorations. I think of "Come and See" as our external message, maybe modifying it to "Come and Share" would be more appropriate for our church family. Speaking of upcoming events, those we know about are featured in the weekly bulletin, Pastor Jeri's weekly message, the UPB website and in our scheduled FaceBook posts. While many of them are also featured throughout this newsletter, let me highlight just a few:

- The new sound system you approved will be installed by the end of the month. Instead of Come and See, Come and Hear!
- Our Christmas musical The Twelve Days of Christmas will be delivered on December 15. You don't want to miss it!
- And just before we swear off all food as part of our New Year's resolution, we will be invited to Eat Your way through Handel's Messiah on 29 December. Oh, come on!

Thank you for helping us spread the good news of our church within your communities and personal spheres of influence by printing an extra copy of the newsletter and sharing it, by taking your copy of the bulletin home to share, by posting special announcements on community bulletin boards, by silently swapping out UPB pens...For all you do, thank you. And as you are planning events, please make sure you let us know as soon as possible so we can help you get your message out, both internally and externally.

As I finish this (possibly a little late), I think some congratulations are in order as it looks like we missed the first advertised Snow of the season. For those of us with weather predicting bones, or fans of some old guy's almanac – we know winter is just around the corner. In preparation, your Communications and Coordination Committee will again be testing lines of communication with media outlets serving both the Baltimore (which covers large parts of Annapolis and surrounding areas like Davidsonville) and the Washington markets (which tries to cover all of us) to ensure we can have them help us spread the word about our status. Some stations allow us to post either Open or Closed messages, some (typically depending on storm intensity) allow us to only post Closed messages and some will only accept them on a space available basis. When in doubt, call someone and stay safe.

As you gather with loved ones to Celebrate the Reason for the Season, we wish you Health and Joy (and an extra scoop of Shalom, with whipped cream)!

-Your Communications and Coordination Committee



What did you say? UPB Has a New Modern Sound System

After hearing about sound and hearing problems in the sanctuary, the Spiritual Formation Committee initiated actions early in 2013 to explore possible solutions. An engineering study of the acoustics in the sanctuary did show existing problems with both speech and music clarity, but especially with hearing speech clearly everywhere in the room. After much analysis and study, the decision was made to contract with Armbruster A/V to install a complete system. The installation started Nov. 19th, and it was ready for operation at the Nov. 24th worship service. The new system has demonstrated its ability to address the existing

sound problems and also opened up opportunities for the future (children's plays, special musical performances, etc.). In addition to receiving a large special gift dedicated to purchasing the system, generous pledges during the recent UPB 2014 Stewardship Campaign have put us well on our way to paying off the system. If you have any questions concerning the system, please contact Gene Barbato. Thanks for your continued support and enjoy UPB's new sounds!

SOTI

Here are some facts/tidbits from Josi Hillary and SOTI's current mission trip...

- I do this because the Hillarys have been blessed immensely.
- An MNC honcho here once said 85% of the Indonesian college graduates are functional illiterates.
- Majority of the 450 students we touch this time hail from economically and educational poor backgrounds. Due to non-merit based cultural practices (seniority is more important than merit and potential), the students' aspirations are very low.
- We teach the first year degree and diploma students and they are extremely motivated.
- Everyone has a cell phone with cameras and they ask for being photographed with the volunteers all the time during the brief break between classes.
- My fondest hope is few from UPB will take a risk and join me to serve here and enjoy the opportunities for a cultural adventure.
- Next and third project is planned for Sept. 2014.
- There are also two additional projects in the formulation stage: to bring the four English Teachers with graduate degrees in English to USA for a sojourn to immerse them in a nearby Fairfax County High School ESL programs and to have families host them and expose them to the real American life; to bring couple of Nutrition graduate students from George Mason University to do their practicum and enable knowledge transfer.



Continued prayers to Josi Hillary and the team of volunteers from the United States who are teaching English at a health sciences academy in Central Java, Indonesia.



December 6 *And the Mountains Echoed*, Khaled Hosseini
Presents a story inspired by human love, how people take care of one another, and how choices resonate through subsequent generations. Afghanistan, 1952. Abdullah and his sister Pari live with their father and step-mother in the small village of Shadbagh. Their father, Saboor, is constantly in search of work and they struggle together through poverty and brutal winters.

January 3 *The Good Father*, Noah Hawley *An intense, psychological novel about one doctor's suspense-filled quest to unlock the mind of a suspected political assassin: his 20-year old son.*

Note: Selections decided by those in attendance. We're always open for new members and book suggestions. **Come join us!**

SEEDS

We all had a great time in SEEDS during the fall. While the older kids did Bible study (their idea!!) with Penny and Julissa in the library, the younger ones met in the sanctuary for music, games, and Bible stories. Our focus was on serving and how we can use the gifts God has given each of us to serve our Lord. Colossians 3:23, Galatians 6:5, Matthew 9:9-11, and John 15:13 are some of the Bible verses that were discussed. The kids took turns reading Psalm 145 and then shared what it was saying to them. There were some pretty amazing answers!! We have started doing circle prayers at the end of each evening and it is really wonderful to hear the kids pray for each other. Playing the chimes continues to be a part of each session. This time the kids learned both the melody and the chords to "How Great is Our God" and played during worship on Consecration Sunday. Winter SEEDS begins on Wednesday, January 15 and will continue through February 26. And, a big thank you to Terry and Joey who stepped in to coordinate the meals. Please see them, or the clipboard in the Narthex, if you are able to help with providing food.

CROP Hunger Walk

Our fall highlight was participating in the CROP Hunger Walk. CROP stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty. Thirteen members of five UPB families walked. Walkers included Mary Jo Munnelly; Terry and Joey Drown; Cathie Lambert; Kenneth, Sumera, Sharon, Amos, and Aaron Saudager; Julissa, Luis, Lorena, and Julian Orta. Our walkers donated and/or raised \$800. Notably, a church visitor and her family donated generously. In addition, \$340 was contributed online, for a total of \$1140. We did very well for a small congregation. Thank you friends and members of UPB!

Christian Spiritual Formation

The Adult Christian Education class, led by Pastor Jeri, had a several week study of Colossians in preparation for Steven Trafton's *Living Letters* presentation of the book. Then, for several more weeks, the class studied from *Feasting on the Word*, a curriculum based on the weekly lectionary. Presently, the class is using the study of Adam Hamilton's entitled *The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem*. The study includes both text and DVD, considering many aspects leading to the birth of Jesus and with application to our own life in Christ. The class meets in the Library from 9:30 to 10:30 am and all are welcome.

There will no Adult class on December 29 as Pastor Jeri will lead the congregation in *Eating Your Way Through Handel's Messiah*. How better to celebrate Jesus birth, just after Christmas!

Alec Burgess is heading the committee to plan for decorating the church for Advent. Please come on Saturday, December 14 to help decorate.

Living Letters: Encountering Colossians

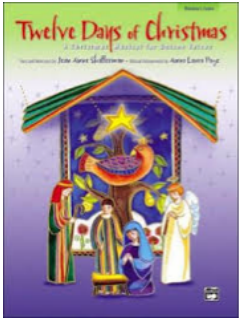


On October 5th, Broadway actor, Stephen Trafton presented *Living Letters: Encountering Colossians* to the United Parish. Stephen brought Paul's writing of the letter to the Colossians to life by engaging the audience and bringing them back in time to become members of the first-century church. God has indeed blessed Stephen with many talents and thank you to Stephen for sharing. If you missed this performance, be sure to catch the next one! Please help Stephen spread the Word around the country and encourage friends and family members to have Stephen visit their church. For more information visit www.facebook.com/experiencelivingletters.

Central Union Mission: Christmas Gifts

We are collecting books, toys and games for 5 young people who we have been asked to help this holiday season. The children are boys ages 9 and 15 as well as 3 girls ages 6, 8 and 17. There will be a clipboard in narthex for sign-ups and suggested gift lists. Please see any member of Mission and Service committee with questions. All gifts due by 12/15 and should be unwrapped.

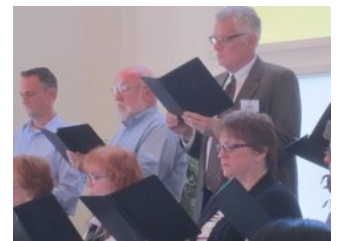
Christmas Musical: Twelve Days of Christmas



You are invited! For centuries, the time between Christmas and Epiphany has been celebrated in music and literature as the "Twelve Days of Christmas", beginning with the birth of Christ and ending with the visit of the three kings. All of us know and have sung the "Twelve Days of Christmas", but have probably never thought of it as being a sacred Christmas carol. What does "eight maids a-milking" have to do with our Christian faith? You will get the answer to this, and learn the religious significance of each verse, during worship on December 15 when the children and youth present "Twelve Days of Christmas". Practice has already begun and everyone is working hard on learning their lines and all the songs. Mark your calendars so that you will not miss this special event!

A look ahead...

- December 8: Congregation Meeting after worship
- December 14: Greening the church, 9 am - 12 noon
- December 15: Christmas musical, "The Twelve Days of Christmas", 10:45 am
- December 29: Engage in worship on Sunday after Christmas. Come "Eat Your way through Handel's Messiah" For all ages.
- December 31: All contributions for 2013 must be received in the church office or given to Mike Mehl by Noon. Those received later will be recorded as 2013 contributions.
- March 2, 2014: HymnFest, 3:30-5:00 pm
- March 5, 2014: Ash Wednesday Service, the beginning of Lent, 7:30 pm



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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.