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UNITED PARISH OF BOWIE

United in Christ - Our Mission: To Serve

Somewhere throughout history, the Christian message has become a little distorted. The most extreme evidence of this distortion is the extreme "Prosperity Gospel" movement that teaches that if you are faithful enough, you will get whatever you want in life. While this is extreme, this idea is pervasive throughout American Christianity, that if we are faithful people we will be blessed and comfortable. I feel that this is a dangerous theology. What does it mean for those who are born into lower income families and have limited economic mobility, for those who lose their jobs, for those who lose their house over high medical bills, or for those who are homeless? Are we saying that they do not have enough faith? That they don't love God enough?



Christ does not promise that if we follow him, we will live comfortable lives. In fact, that is counter to many of Christ's teachings. Christ warns the disciples that if they follow him, they will be persecuted for doing so. This certainly came to pass, as tradition tells us that all the disciples, except for John, were put to death for their beliefs. Many in the early church were persecuted, arrested, even killed. You cannot argue that they were not faithful followers of Christ. While we don't know how their lives would have turned out if they had not followed Christ, chances are their lives were not easier or more comfortable for doing so. In fact, their lives were probably infinitely more difficult.

Christ also told his disciples that they were to leave their homes and families. In Matthew 16:24, Jesus said, "If any want to be my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." While, I do not think Christ is saying that we necessarily have to die for our faith, we should be prepared to sacrifice for it, if needed. After all we profess Christ as our savior, so we worship a Messiah who was a servant, who said the first shall be last and the last shall be first, and who ultimately, who sacrificed himself for all.

Does this mean that if we are Christians, we will have difficult lives? Of course not, but it does mean that we are not promised easy, comfortable lives. It also means that we are called to give of ourselves, to sacrifice. I bring up the idea of sacrifice, because in the next few months there are several things going on that I want you to keep in mind. The first is that we will be talking about stewardship in the weeks leading up to consecration Sunday. The second is that the nominating committee will be meeting and looking for people to help lead the church. Finally, we are entering the holiday season with Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas.

What do these three events have in common? They all relate to giving thanks to God for our blessings. We have all been blessed with gifts that we can use to glorify God. As we approach consecration Sunday and make our pledges, ask yourself, how has God blessed you? It is a good time to ask yourself who you can financially contribute more to the

church. What can you sacrifice? Can you give up one meal out a month and pledge that amount? Could you go without a morning coffee from McDonalds or Starbucks once a week? What can you give up?

As the nominating committee meets, you may consider if you could sacrifice some of your time? It might mean an evening away from home every now and then; it might mean a little extra work, some extra effort, or more involvement. The time you invest in serving the Church as an officer is time you won't be able to be doing something else. It is also time you will be growing spiritually, shaping the future of the church, and helping to serve as a leader.

The idea of stewardship is that God has entrusted us with gifts, whether it be time, talent, treasure, or anything else. If we are entrusted with these gifts by God, we should be using them to serve God by worshipping God, proclaiming glory to God's name, helping those created in God's image. While actual stewards are not very common today, think about the person managing your pension or 401(K). You entrust them with your money. You do this with the understanding that they will use it to best serve your interests. Stewardship is the same concept. How will you use your gifts to thank God for all that you have been given?

Faithfully,
Chris

2 Corinthians 9:10-12: ¹⁰He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; ¹²for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.



Picks 2014-2015

(Note: book selections and location are subject to change. See the bulletin for any updates)

December 5: *Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison* by Piper Kerman

January 2: *Cry the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton

February 6: *11/22/63 JFK Slain in Dallas* by Stephen King

March 6: *Bully Pulpit* by Doris Kearns Goodwin

April 3: *Hunter* by Robert Bidinotto

May 1: *The Boy who was Raised as a Dog* by Bruce Duncan Perry



Interfaith Thanksgiving Service
The Interfaith Council of Suburban Maryland

*Invites you to our annual Thanksgiving
Service*

**"We are One in Building
the Beloved Community"**

November 26, 2014 at 7:30 P.M.

**Christian Community Presbyterian Church
3120 Belair Drive
Bowie, MD 20715
t. 301-262-6008
ccpcbowie@verizon.net**

*Participating Traditions: Jewish, Christian, Islamic
and Unitarian Universalist*



We invite you and your family to our

Christmas Open House

Stop by anytime

**Sunday, December 14th
3:00-6:00 P.M.**

12500 Rockledge Drive, Bowie, MD 20715

**Come celebrate the season with good
food and good friends!**

~ Chris, Heather, and Hannah Deacon

International Cultural Heritage Dinner



To help us celebrate Consecration Sunday, November 23, immediately after worship, we would like to invite you to participate in an International Cultural Heritage Dinner. This is an opportunity to share a special food dish that is served in your home representing your cultural roots. This pot luck luncheon will be served buffet style so your food should be something that can be divided in small portions for many to taste. Please also plan to provide a means to keep your food hot (such as a crock pot) or cold during the service due to our limited kitchen facilities.

Please also plan to wear something that represents your Cultural Heritage.



Badgering God



The world squeezes too close
our breath catches with fear
Eve and Adam's sin infects us
we hide from God
pretend He's not here

broken ones still scan the sky for wings
will mercy drop in packs of food
a flimsy shelter or tablets to numb
a drink of love to swallow hate
pills of hope to bring us peace

we groan for God
to intervene
we've tasted forbidden fruit
how can we be purged
we twist and turn
we're sick inside
until we find You
outside and within
You knew us in our mother's womb*
we call, we cry, we badger You
come, be born in us again.

Shirley Klotz Bickel, C. 2014

* "...you knit me together in my mother's womb." (Psalm 139:13b)

Friendly Reminders



November 17
November 23

Warm Nights
Consecration Sunday and
International Cultural Heritage
Dinner

December 13
December 14
December 24
June 24, 2015
July 27-31, 2015

Greening of the church, 9 AM – 12 PM
Christmas Play, 10:45 AM
Christmas Eve Service, 7 PM
Watoto Children's Choir
5th Annual Art & Music Camp



*I
Love
You*

*I love you I love you,
I love you even when you are sick,
I love you I love you,
I love you everywhere,
I love you I love you,
I love you everywhere I go.*

- Kate Bickel, 5 years old



SEEDS

Fall SEEDS was filled with lots of different activities. We talked about change and how the thought of change can make us feel a little scared and uncomfortable. Everyone thought about the one big change that was happening in our church, a new pastor coming. There was excitement with the idea of getting to know Pastor Chris, and at the same time, a little sadness that Pastor Jeri was leaving. One night we made cards for Pastor Jeri, letting her know that we would miss her. We also made cards to welcome Pastor Chris. (Thank you for hanging them in your office!) 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 though all the changes in our lives.

On another night we had a church scavenger hunt. We looked for different places including: the nursery, Sunday School rooms, the number of outside doors; the church office; the pastor's office, and the number of rooms that have a cross on the wall. Now, if anyone asks where a certain room is, we can tell them!

Playing chimes continues to be a part of each session. This time the kids learned the melody of "Jesus Loves the Little Children" and played during both worship on October 26 and later that evening for the installation of Pastor Chris!

We ended the fall session with celebrating all the fall birthdays and painting pumpkins. The pumpkins were on display in the Narthex on November 2.

Thanks to all of you who helped provide food each week. And a big THANK YOU to Joey and Terry who coordinated all the meals.

Winter SEEDS begins on Wednesday, January 14 and will continue through February 11. We are always looking for new and exciting ways to help our children, youth, and families grow in their faith. If you have any ideas, or would like to be a part of the SEEDS ministry, please see Diane or Sue.



Mission and Service



The UP Team is ready to help! Call Betsy Burian at 301-526-7421 or email her at acornmusic@msn.com if you are in need of a helping hand during Bowie's fall leaf collection. Just call or write and the UP Team will be there!



The "Stop Hunger Now" project, held on September 20, was a big success. Led by Kathy Busch, some forty volunteers assembled and packed 10,000 simple but nutritional meals for shipment abroad. Special thanks to the First Community Church UCC for their participation. Their help was invaluable.



Warm Nights

We shall be participating in two "Warm Nights," a program for the homeless at All Saints Lutheran Church on November 17 and at Village Baptist Church on a date to be announced. The meal at All Saints will be chili, cornbread, salad, and dessert. We are also welcome to provide servers.

Operation Christmas Miracle

UPB will support Central Union Mission's Operation Christmas Miracle by providing seven Christmas gift packages for needy children. The sign up is in the narthex and unwrapped gifts are due no later than December 7th. In addition, several Christmas meals will be given, in cooperation with the Bowie Food Pantry.

Bowie Food Pantry

UPB will support the Bowie Food Pantry by supplying several Christmas meals. More information to follow.

Sarojini Orphanage Trust, Inc. (SOTI)

Josi Hillary led a small group of SOTI sponsored volunteers to teach native English speaking for five weeks to the first year students of a health sciences academy in Central Java, Indonesia that provides degree programs in Nursing, Public Health, Nutrition and Pharmacology.

During this third such trip in two years, SOTI sponsored two English Lecturers from the academy to attend a six weeks customized program to teach English as a second language at the Annandale campus of NOVA.

Thank you UPB for your support!





Photos from Pastor Chris' Installation Service



It is hard to believe that just a month ago, we were finishing packing and leaving Illinois for Maryland! It has been a tremendous month and we look forward to many, many more. This move and transition would not have been as smooth if it were not for you. The welcome we have received has been overwhelming. From the people that helped us paint and prepare our house, to the wonderful welcome basket, cards, and gift cards, it has all meant so much for us. Thank you for all you have done to give us such a warm welcome.

*Thankfully,
Chris, Heather, and Hannah*

Christmas Play

What happens when a group of friends decide to enter into a contest for “The Biggest, Brightest Christmas Show Ever”? Well, of course, something suddenly goes wrong – at the worst time in the show – as often happens during a live performance! And what does everyone learn from this moment? For the answer to that, you will need to come and see *An Unplugged Christmas* which will be presented during worship on December 14th. Practice has already begun and everyone is working hard to learn their parts and the songs. Mark your calendar because you do not want to miss this special event!



An Unplugged Christmas
December 14th, 10:45 AM

Christmas Eve Service
December 24th, 7:00 PM

*Invite your friends and family to join
UPB in celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ!*



The United Parish of Bowie 2515 Mitchellville Road Bowie, Maryland 20716
Phone: 301.249.6411 Email: ckdeacon@yahoo.com



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.