

United Parish of Bowie

United in Christ – Our Mission: To Serve



Let's Join the Movement!

November is quickly passing by and it will almost be Advent! I am still in denial that August is over, but time marches on! We know the Christmas season is right around the corner because pre “Black Friday” leaks are everywhere and Christmas displays are already up in stores.

A few years ago, I read about a movement called the “Advent Conspiracy”. The Advent Conspiracy is a movement to recapture both Advent and Christmas. Their slogan is “Christmas can [still] change the world. Give presence.” This movement recognizes that the original Christmas was a history changing event when God gave himself to the world in Jesus Christ. The Advent Conspiracy movement says that instead of rushing around and buying presents out of obligation, we, too, should give of ourselves.

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The concept behind Advent Conspiracy has four simple components, which we will explore in a sermon series throughout Advent. Each component by itself makes sense, but put together they have the potential to be revolutionary.

The first component of re-revolutionizing Christmas is to worship fully. The Advent season starts with Jesus and it ends with Jesus. Think back to the first Christmas, the shepherds and the wise men sought out Jesus to worship him. Advent is a time when we prepare to bow down and worship the coming Christ.

The second concept is to spend less. The idea behind this is that too often, we buy gifts out of obligation, because we feel we have to buy somebody something. The idea is not to eliminate buying gifts all together, but to spend less and to give more thoughtfully. In fact, the third concept is to give more. God loves us so much, that he gave of himself in the

gift of Christ. Christmas is a time we, too, should give of ourselves. We should give our time and our talents. Make cookies, take the kids sledding, or just spend time together. My best Christmas memories are not gifts that I have received, but time spent with friends and family.

The final concept of the Advent Conspiracy is to love all. When Jesus loved, he loved in ways the world had never imagined. Though rich, he became poor to love the poor, the forgotten, the overlooked and the sick. He loved not only the people who were close to him, but also those who were forgotten by society. By spending less at Christmas, we have the opportunity to join him in giving resources to those who need help the most. Last year, 450 billion dollars was spent on Christmas in the United States. For a tenth of that, we could provide clean water for the entire world. Spending less at Christmas frees us up to give more to help people who are less fortunate than us.

What I like most about the Advent Conspiracy is that it is not an organization and it isn't looking for money. Rather, it is a movement based on a simple idea for you to take and run with. You can take the four concepts: worship fully, spend less, give more, and love fully and shape them to your life as you see fit. If you incorporate these four concepts into your Holiday season, you will save money, grow closer to loved ones, build relationships and memories, help those less fortunate than you, and above all glorify God and make our celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ a revolutionary event once more. Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

- Pastor Chris

In the coming weeks, the UPB website is going to add a new feature: PayPal! For those people that would like to make their contributions online, you will soon be able to do so. As we roll this out, we will also be offering people the option to have their contributions automatically deducted from their bank accounts. Please know these are optional: you are welcome to continue making your contributions via check or cash as you always have. Be on the lookout for more information on these new giving methods. If you have any questions, please see Heather Deacon or Gene Barbato.



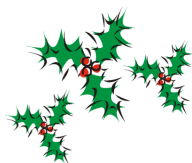
Christian Spiritual Formation



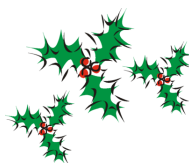
Nikki Hillary led a Bible study on the Book of Acts. During the six weeks, the class read the scriptures to learn about the formation of the early Christian church, the apostles, and Paul's many trips to different lands to spread the Word.



All Sunday school classes are studying an Advent curriculum called Sent. Sunday school will be held at 11:15 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. The classes will begin on November 29th.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE



The Christmas Eve service will be held Thursday evening, December 24th at 7:00 p.m. Invite your family and friends to this special service of celebration of our Lord's birth!

Mission and Service

The Committee is pleased to welcome Erma Barron as a new member. Our congregation recently prepared and served the first of two Warm Nights meals to twenty-four homeless persons, including eleven children, who were spending the week at All Saints Lutheran Church. The meal consisted of chili, cornbread, salad, and dessert. All Saints purchased chicken fingers for the younger children. The second meal will be provided later at Village Baptist Church. Thank you to those who helped provide these meals year after year.



A Look Back at Fall 2015...



Board Corner

It is important to the Board that our congregation be 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.

Love. Grow. Serve.

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

- The repair and improvement work on the heating and air conditioning systems servicing the sanctuary, previously approved by the Board, was completed in early November. This work should result in more efficient operations and longer life of the two systems involved.
- The Board-approved project led by Heather Deacon to establish and facilitate on-line and electronic donations is in the process of implementation. Board member Gene Barbato serves as Heather's field supervisor and Board contact.
- The Board pursued various options to advertise and solicit candidates for the church's currently vacant nursery attendant position.
- The Board continued to work on and finalize a Personnel Policy Manual for the church. Also, Nursery Attendant Guidelines and surveys for Pastor and Board evaluations were developed and finalized.
- The Board's Financial Audit Review team completed their review of the church's 2014 financial records and transactions.
- The Board oversaw the 2016 UPB Stewardship Campaign which culminated on Consecration Sunday, October 25th. The pledged amount was approximately 10% above the 2015 level. The Board is starting the process of formulating the 2016 UPB budget, which will be presented to the congregation for approval in January, 2016.
- Some of the Committee activities supported by the Board were:
 - Communications – Pastor's sermons are now available on the UPB website.
 - Ministry Support – HVAC repair work was monitored by committee members; a speaker was installed in the nursery to allow monitoring of the worship service.
 - Children, Youth, and Family – Hosted a Back to School Swim

Party; supported the Trunk or Treat event; conducted the Seeds Program for the youth and prep sessions for the Christmas children's Program.

- Membership and Fellowship – Rally Day and Consecration Sunday activities were supported by Committee members; the Ladies Luncheon, Ladies Night Out, Men's Breakfast and Men's Night Out groups continued to share fellowship; the Book Club's reading for November is "Go Set a Watchman" by Harper Lee.
- Christian Spiritual Formation – Sunday school sessions for youth and adults started in September; Nikki Hillary conducted a Bible Study on Paul.
- Missions and Service – Participated in the 2015 Crop Walk, continued gathering meals for the Bowie Family Crisis Center and support of the Warm Nights program.

The Board represents the members of the United Parish. Please feel free to contact any Board member or Pastor Chris with your ideas, suggestions and/or concerns.

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY (CYF)

SEEDS

Fall SEEDS was filled with lots of different activities as we used Jeff Slaughter's "Fun Run" to explore Jesus' "I am" statements from John.

- "I am the Light of the World" – Using plates, pennies, candles, water, and small glasses, the kids demonstrated how Jesus took our sins away.
- "I am the Good Shepherd" – We learned all sorts of interesting facts about sheep including that they are not very smart and need to have shepherd to help keep them safe. We also made great bookmarks that had Psalm 23 on the back. Our dessert that night was marshmallow sheep! (marshmallows, pretzels, and icing – yum!)
- "I am the Bread of Life" – We read John 6:1-13, Feeding of the Five Thousand, and discussed all the different ways that Jesus is our bread of life: provides for us, teaches us, forgives us, guides us, and loves us. We finished with a bread and spoon relay – run with lots of energy and spirit!



- “I am the Living Water” – We named many different reasons that we need and use water. However, we know that sometimes we have a thirst so great that only Jesus can fill it. Everyone was very creative in designing rainmakers – which really worked. It rained the next day!
- “I am the Vine. You are the Branches” – We read Galatians 5:22 and practiced saying “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”. Several said they had a hard time with practicing self-control! Hopefully the ivy that each one planted in their decorated pot is still growing!

In addition to all the different activities, we began every session by singing “Keep the Faith”, a song that encourages us to always hold on to our faith as we run this race called life. We also sang “I am the Bread of Life”, and “Fruit of the Spirit”. Adults and kids had fun the last night making their own fruit pizza using sugar cookies, icing, and cut up fruit!

While the younger kids were busy with Diane and Sue, Chris met with the youth, who watched and discussed different videos from the NOOMA series by Rob Bell. They would then join the younger ones for dessert.

Thanks to the following who helped provide food: Dina Bickel, Shirley Bickel, Mary Bird, Alex and Judith Christopher, Joey and Terry Drown, Tanya Settles, Janice Sheppard, Nancy Snyder, Barbara Trafton, and the SEEDS Team.

Winter SEEDS begins on Wednesday, January 13th and will continue through February 3rd. 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.



CHRISTMAS PLAY

Practice has begun our Christmas play, “Christmas in Black and White”, a musical reminding all of us that Christmas is not just another “holiday”. Christmas is a special day when God sent His one

and only Son, Jesus, to be born in a manger in Bethlehem. To learn how penguins help kids discover the real meaning of Christmas, you will need to come to the play which will be presented during worship on December 20. Mark your calendars now. You do not want to miss this special event!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

We began something new at UPB this year – Sunday School after worship. With the majority of children in church staying for Sunday School, we feel that this has been a positive step, and look forward to having more participation in the future.

This fall, both the elementary - aged children (kindergarten-fifth grade), and the youth (sixth grade-twelfth grade) have been watching short clips from movies and discussing how it interacts with scripture. Movies included “Wreck it Ralph”, “Bruce Almighty”, “Inside Out” and



“The Hunchback of Notre Dame” with lessons on redemption, loving your neighbor, Jesus’ humanity, and being an outcast. Thanks to the following who helped to teach during the fall: Jan and Gene Barbato, Dina Bickel, Marva Connolly, Chris Deacon, Heather Deacon, Terry Drown, Violet Igwacho, Julissa Orta, and Janice Sheppard.



During Advent, everyone; kids, youth, and adults; will be using the book *Sent, Delivering the Gift of Hope at Christmas*, by Jorge Acevedo. Just as God sent Jesus into the world so that He might change it, today, all of us are sent out into the world to be Jesus’ hands and feet and deliver God’s gift of hope to a world in need. We hope that everyone will take part in this meaningful Advent study.



In January, the elementary-aged children will begin *Growing in Grace and Gratitude* which is a Presbyterian published curriculum rooted in our beliefs that God's grace and our gratitude are the heartbeat of our faith, life and worship. It inspires children to learn and practice hospitality, generosity, and love that reaches beyond Sunday morning, and encourages children to live their lives as an expression of God's grace. In addition, parents will be able to access resources by downloading an app. The youth will be using the Connect Series, which has two-three session lessons on a variety of topics that include "Discovering our Gifts", "Media: Visions, Voices, and Choices", and "Shaping our Faith". We anticipate some very lively discussion!



The CYF encourages all of you to consider if God might be calling you to be a part of the Sunday School Team of Teachers. Please see Chris or Sue if you are interested.

Calendar

Tue Dec 1, 2015	6:30pm – 9:00pm	Parish Board Meeting - United Parish of Bowie
Wed Dec 2, 2015	5:45pm – 6:45pm	Christmas Play Practice - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Rd, Bowie, MD 20716, United States
	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Choir Rehearsal - United Parish of Bowie
Sun Dec 6, 2015	All day	Christmas Caroling
	10:00am – 11:00am	Worship Service With Holy Communion - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie MD 20716
	11:30am – 12:15pm	Christian Education - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie, MD 20716, United States
	12:00pm – 12:30pm	Congregational Meeting to Elect Parish Board Members - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie, MD 20716, United States
Wed Dec 9, 2015	5:45pm – 6:45pm	Christmas Play Practice - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Rd, Bowie, MD 20716, United States
	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Choir Rehearsal - United Parish of Bowie
Thu Dec 10, 2015	7:45am – 9:00am	Men's Breakfast - Nautilus Diner, 1709 Transportation Drive, Crofton, MD, United States
Fri Dec 11, 2015	11:30am – 1:00pm	Ladies Luncheon at Olive Garden - Olive Garden, 4101 Towne Center Blvd, Bowie, MD 20716, United States
Sun Dec 13, 2015	10:00am – 11:00am	Worship Service - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie MD 20716
	11:00am – 11:30am	Chat & Chew (A to G)
	11:30am – 12:15pm	Christian Education - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie, MD 20716, United States
Wed Dec 16, 2015	5:45pm – 6:45pm	Christmas Play Practice - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Rd, Bowie, MD 20716, United States
	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Choir Rehearsal - United Parish of Bowie
Thu Dec 17, 2015	6:30pm – 8:30pm	Men's Night Out - Location To Be Determined
Sun Dec 20, 2015	All day	Family Crisis Center Meal
	All day	Christmas Play
	10:00am – 11:00am	Worship Service - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Road Bowie, MD 20716
	11:30am – 12:15pm	Christian Education - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie, MD 20716, United States
Wed Dec 23, 2015	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Choir Rehearsal - United Parish of Bowie
Thu Dec 24, 2015	All day	Christmas Eve
	7:00pm – 8:00pm	Worship Service - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie, MD
Fri Dec 25, 2015	All day	Christmas
Sun Dec 27, 2015	10:00am – 11:00am	Worship Service - United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Road Bowie, MD 20716
	11:00am – 11:30am	Chat & Chew (H to Z)
Wed Dec 30, 2015	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Choir Rehearsal - United Parish of Bowie
Thu Dec 31, 2015	All day	New Year's Eve

Ongoing Ministries

Worship and Christian Education

Worship Service: Worship will be at 10:00 a.m. with nursery available
+ 1st Sunday Communion
+ 3rd Sunday (*usually*) Children's Sermon w/ Puppets;
Time with Children all other Sundays
Choir: Wed. 7:30 p.m. and Sunday 10:30 a.m.
Adult Education: Sundays 11:15 -12:00 p.m.
Sunday School: Sundays 11:15- 12:00 p.m.
Seeds of Worship: Family mid-week ministry program at UPB.
Wednesday 6:00—7:15 p.m.

Mission and Service

Crisis Center Meal: UPB provides Family Crisis Center dinner. Sign up to bring a part of the meal 3rd Sunday bring your donation to UPB.
Bowie Food Pantry: Please bring your non-perishable food donation, paper goods, baby items (diapers/wipes), and toiletries to the basket in the Narthex. Thanks for your generous giving.

Fellowship

Chat & Chew Food and Fellowship: 2nd & 4th Sundays in the Narthex following Worship
Men's Breakfast: 2nd and 4th Thursday 7:45 a.m. Nautilus Diner, Crofton
Men's Night Out: 3rd Thursday 6:30 p.m. (Location TBA)
Book Club: 1st Friday night of the month at the Barbato home
Ladies Luncheon: 2nd Friday 11:30 a.m. Olive Garden
Ladies Night Out: 4th Thursday 6:30 p.m. Old Bowie Town Grille

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2515 Mitchellville Road
Bowie, Maryland 20716