



United in Christ  
Our Mission: To Serve

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### Pastor's Corner:

#### *Spring is in the air*

Finally, signs of spring... a couple of sixty degree days strung together; crocuses are poking their purple and white petals up from the dark brown beauty bark; daffodils are making their presence known, some in full bloom others waiting for a few more days of sunshine... Maybe it's because this was the first real experience of winter I can remember (we didn't have winter in Seattle or San Francisco like we do here) but I have been struck by the beauty that is emerging in my first spring in Bowie, and I have been told it's not even in full swing yet. I look forward to seeing the cherry blossoms down town, but at this point I am just happy to see signs of life again. There were people in my neighborhood bar-b-queing last weekend, and all sorts of new birds are showing up at our backyard birdfeeder and when I walk the dog in the evening, there are about ten times as many people out walking as there were a month ago.

A couple of days ago, while I was walking (one of the first times since I've been here that it wasn't dark by the time I took the dog out) I was drawn to one particular tree in our neighborhood. It was different from the others. Some of the trees in the area didn't have any leaves on them at all; they still looked like it was the dead of winter. A few trees that I could see had a couple of brown leaves still clinging to the branches; apparently no-one had told them fall was long gone. Most of the trees were doing exactly what you might expect as we head into spring... they had buds almost ready to erupt with new leaves that just were not quite there yet. But this tree, this one tree that caught my attention, had all four seasons represented in its branches. On a couple of branches there were three or four little brown leaves who had not yet

felt gravity's pull. The outermost branch tips were bare and a light tan color, still in the dead of winter. Closer in to the trunk, the buds of spring were evident and new leaves were getting ready. And then in one place on the tree, I do not know if it was because the sun hit those branches more of the day or if it was just some fluke of nature, but there was a patch of green leaves that were well on their way to maturation.

The tree was a fascinating phenomenon in and of itself, and I began to think to myself, isn't that the way life works. That tree is just like us. I am convinced that in each one of us, at any given time, there are all sorts of things going on and in a sense the seasons are all represented.

**Summer:** What is strong and vibrant within me? What brings joy and is going well?

**Fall:** What is in me that could be (and maybe should be) let go of? What gets in the way?

**Winter:** What is lying dormant within me, biding time until the conditions are right?

**Spring:** What is bursting forth with new life?

While some of the seasons may be more pleasant than others, each of them is necessary and each of them is part of the rhythm of life. There is something about the Lenten journey that echoes the seasons, from strength, to letting go, dormancy and then... what we're all waiting for: new life bursting forth from the places that looked and felt like death. With all its signs of life, Spring is a season of hope. As the days get longer, the flowers pop up from the ground, the cherry blossoms bloom, and the barbecues flare up, may they be reminders for you and for me that hope endures. And even more, may they be reminders of *why* hope endures, because nothing...not even death could hold down our Lord Jesus Christ. Easter is almost here! Alleluia and Amen.

*Pastor Dan*

## **A Special Opening Ceremony**

*Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Pastor Dan was invited to open the legislative session of the Maryland State Senate in Prayer.*



*Here is Dan's prayer for the MD State Senate:*

Gracious God, you are the creator and sustainer, the source of all being. We pause to recognize your presence this morning and we ask that you be active in the hearts, minds, hands and voices of the people assembled here to do the work of the state.

Bless those who hold office in this government; especially those who sit in this legislative session today. Grant that they may do their work in a spirit of wisdom, kindness and humility.

Where there is division, shed light so that there may be collegiality even in the midst of disagreement. Where there are impossible issues to solve or impossible tasks to undertake, grant creativity so that what will be is not bound only by what has been but is also open to the possibility of what might be; for there is abundance in your good creation.

Help us to remember that your abundance is not only for a few, but it is your gift to all people. As decisions are made and laws enacted, we ask that your life-giving spirit would move in this place. That those who are voiceless and powerless: the homeless and hungry, the poor and lonely, the cold and afraid would be remembered as people whom

you also love and people whom we also serve, for we are all one people.

God we ask that you open the hearts of all people so that dividing barriers may fall, suspicions and hatreds may cease, and we may recognize that regardless of race or gender, economic position or education level, we are one people. You have called the leaders and lawmakers of this government to the service of your people. Bless them and their efforts that we may live together in justice, in peace and in hope. So that we may in turn be a blessing to our communities, our country and our world. For in the end, it is your world and we are your people.

Amen

*Prayer of Invocation prepared for  
Maryland State Senate 2/4/09 by  
Rev. Daniel Holland  
Pastor: United Parish of Bowie, Bowie, MD*

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### **Children Prepare for Palm Sunday**

Marva Connolly meets regularly with our church school children to teach them Christian songs. They like songs with movement. Currently they are preparing to wave palms and sing in our Palm Sunday worship service.

### **Children's Church School Classes**

Pearl Donovan recently finished a unit teaching our elementary children about Jesus. Dina Bickel is our current teacher of those children as they learn about Jesus' last days on earth. Linda Hutchinson has been and is our current teacher of the four and five year olds.

### **A New Look**

The classroom for the four and five year olds-- that many of us refer to as the nursery -- has been undergoing some major renovations recently. Several people started the project with a clean-up of the toys and furniture as well as beginning to paint the room. Mary Jo Munnelly, Marva Connolly, Janice Sheppard, Michel Dzaringa, Tom Chin, Jim Hutchinson, and Shirley Bickel were all involved in starting this project and have done a great job. But Linda Hutchinson has devoted an unbelievable number of hours painting, rearranging, cleaning, sewing curtains and making pillows to make this an inviting room for our little ones. And she is still

adding her personal touches as the room changes on a weekly basis. Be sure to take a look at the changes as Linda finishes this project. (And just to show how often Linda and her husband, Jim, were in the church.... I was about to change their address in the directory to 2515 Mitchellville Road....) ☺

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### **Short-Lived Promises**

They tried to stone him, he didn't run like a rabbit. He was for real, this friend of outcasts, sickly ones, and searching ones like me. Common folk followed him, forgot to eat at times, cheered him as their promised King. They said he loved the tax collector, rebirthed the woman muddied by adultery, cast out demons, brought his dead friend back to life. I didn't understand him, not until he spoke, looking directly at me with singleness of sight and Godly intensity. In my bones I sensed he cared for me. I understood Peter. I too wanted to stay with Jesus, go with him, be close like family. In the upper room he shared bread, confused us calling bread his body. Dumbfounded we drank the wine he called his blood. Why this talk of suffering and betrayal? All too soon Jesus left the room to pray. We followed him to the garden. Jesus asked us to keep watch. Worn out from keeping up with him, we crawled into our cocoons and fell asleep. Too late we wakened, saw the soldiers arrest Jesus, mistreat him like a traitor, this humble man.

Like the snake of Eden our thoughts convinced us life was better than loyalty, Peter and I sneaked away to hide in the courtyard. What was going to happen to our leader? Three times Peter was asked about Jesus. Peter played dumb, didn't know the man. Then the rooster screeched just like Jesus had warned, Peter would deny him before the cock crowed. Buckled by his boulder of guilt, Peter sank to the ground. In my heart I too had promised to follow Jesus anywhere. What if the soldiers found and arrested me? This was no safe place to be. I sank deeper into the shadows, then slithered away.

*Shirley Klotz Bickel*  
C. 2009

### **Christmas In April**

*Once again UPB members will be pitching in on Saturday April 25th to help needy homeowners in*

*PG County with needed repairs to their homes (painting, carpentry, yard work, etc.). Look for a volunteer sheet to be passed shortly or contact Herb Sheppard @ herbshep@aol.com if you'd like to volunteer.*

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### **The Children of United Parish**

We are putting together collages of children -- past and present -- who have attended United Parish. Our preference is for pictures of children when they were 5 or younger, regardless of what age they attended UPB. Pictures may be sent via email or hard copies dropped off at the church. If you provide hard copies, please put the name(s) on the back. When the collage is completed, we will return your picture. You may send your pictures to Patty Keys at [patty216@gmail.com](mailto:patty216@gmail.com). If you have any questions you may contact Patty or Linda Hutchinson at [lhutchinson@verizon.net](mailto:lhutchinson@verizon.net). We would like all pictures by March 30.

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### **TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The technology committee met on March 7 to discuss the status of United Parish in the "tech world" and to determine where we needed to be. We are currently updating the website as well as evaluating and upgrading our current equipment in the church. Several things we are working on are:

- A more proactive website with more information about our history, current staff and committees, and services we provide in the mission field- including links to the agencies
- Weekly bulletins on the website
- A newer computer/monitor in the library,
- A laptop with wireless access available for use anywhere in the church,
- A computer in each classroom
- A UPB Blog

We will keep you posted and would like your requests and suggestions. Please contact me if you have any ideas or suggestions to share. We are also looking for equipment donations.

*Patty Keys*

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### **ANNUAL YARD SALE!!!!**

Get your treasures and cast-offs ready for the UPB yard sale. It's time to do your spring cleaning and help the church and community at the same time. If you have any questions, contact Diane Eades.

United Parish of Bowie  
 May 16th  
 8:00am to 1:00pm  
 Neighbors!  
 Join us on the lawn to sell your  
 treasures

**YARD SALE**

To reserve your space: Call 301-249-6411 or  
 email: mddiane19@aol.com  
 Rain date: May 23, 2009





Sixteen years ago, the founders of this school chose this State for the school because Orissa is in the tribal belt that hosts up of 62 tribal groups. Despite the gruesome murders of many missionaries, pastors and evangelists, tremendous revivals are taking place in Orissa and the tribals are gradually accepting Jesus as their savior.

The school is in Lamptapet District, a relatively peaceful area, 3,000' above sea level and an ideal location for a residential school. Adjacent to the school is Asha Kiran, a missionary hospital.

The school has good infrastructure facilities with adequate class rooms, playfields, dormitories for students, staff residences, guest house etc., to house 250 students from I to XII standard. It is affiliated at the federal level with the Indian Central Board of Education, a regulatory authority.

**Nikki Hillary's Trip to India:**



**Anand Niketan, Orissa State, India where Nikki has been volunteering and teaching**



The vision of Anand Niketan, a residential school in Orissa State, India is to give protection and quality education to the children of Indian Missionaries working in all parts of India. This is the only school in North India meeting the educational needs of missionary children.

Anand Niketan is the only institution operating under Anand Education Society that was established as a non-profit organization in the State of Tamil Nadu and also registered at the federal level to receive assistance from abroad. The work started in November 1992. Current Board of Directors are volunteering their time and are made up of three medical professionals, one Pastor and the rest are educationists.



## Adult Education

Past and current course offerings for this spring are listed on the flier enclosed with this newsletter. Please join us for one of the courses coming up and let Doug Snyder or Dan Holland if there is a course you would like to see offered or that you would like to present at United Parish.

We are always looking for speakers and teachers for Adult Education. We hope you will join us!

## Future Newsletters

Please feel free to send articles and/or pictures for the newsletter. Items about children's progress at school/college, engagements, weddings, mission work—anything you would like to share. Electronic submissions are preferred, but I can take any format.

## Going Green at UPB

This newsletter will be published on our website and has been emailed to you. One copy is currently mailed to each family. If you no longer want the **mailed copy**, please send an email to [upbannounce@gmail.com](mailto:upbannounce@gmail.com). This will save UPB printing and mailing costs.

Another way to save is to recycle your bulletins every week. If you do not wish to keep your bulletin, just place them back on the narthex table as you leave.

We do have recycling bins at UPB and will be placing some in the narthex to encourage more recycling.



## *Lenten and Easter Services*

*Palm Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

*11:00 AM*

*Maundy Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

*7:30 PM*

*Good Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

*7:30 PM*

*Easter Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

*11:00 AM*



***We invite you to worship with us!***

Sunday Worship Service  
11:00 AM

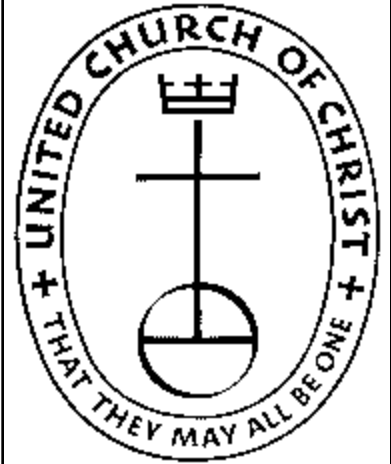
Adult Education  
10:00 AM

Childcare is provided  
from  
10:00 AM until 12:00 PM

Sunday School  
11:00 AM

Communion is offered the  
first Sunday of every month

We are affiliated with both the Presbyterian  
Church (U.S.A.) and the United Church of Christ.



**United Parish of Bowie  
P.O. Box 1571  
Bowie, MD 20717**

**Address Correction Requested**