



## United Parish of Bowie

United in Christ - Our Mission: To Serve

March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Brothers and sisters,

There is still much that is unknown about Covid-19 and news seems to be changing rapidly. The Board of the United Parish of Bowie discussed in depth how we should respond to the pandemic and the closing of schools, churches, and public events throughout our country and the DMV.

It is a rapidly changing situation. Yesterday, I was composing a letter about continuing worship and precautions we were taking. While waiting for feedback from the board, Governor Hogan held a press conference encouraging social distancing, discouraging crowds, and canceling school for the next two weeks. As the board discussed how this would affect church activity and worship going forward, we received a recommendation from the National Capital Presbytery to not worship in person for at least the next two weeks. After prayerful consideration, we have decided to follow the Presbytery's recommendation. This is not a decision we have come to lightly. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "when one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it." It is in this Spirit, thinking of our many members who the CDC are considered "at risk" that we make this decision.

The leadership of the United Parish of Bowie is committed to continue providing for worship and community as best we can. This Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, I will record an abbreviated sermon and scripture reading via video. It will be posted on the church website, Facebook page, and sent out via email. On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, we will have a more in-depth worship service online. I will send out details as it is worked out.

As I have said many times, a church is not the building, but the people. To continue providing a sense of community, we will have two brief "Zoom" prayer services each week, Tuesday at 7:30 PM and Thursday at 1:00 PM. This will include scripture, a devotional, and a time of prayer. Zoom invitations will be sent out through facebook and email. "Zoom" was chosen because it is free, a very accessible, user-friendly tool. If you are unfamiliar with it, you can learn more here -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFhAEoCF7jg>

REV. CHRIS DEACON, Pastor  
ckdeacon@yahoo.com  
www.unitedparishbowie.org

2515 Mitchellville Rd.  
PO Box 1571  
Bowie, MD 20717-0171

Church Phone/Fax:  
301-249-6411

Additionally, the remainder of Lenten dinners are canceled. Chris will be in the office on Thursdays and will work remotely the rest of the time. If Thursdays do not work, he will also be available by appointment. He is also reachable by email, phone, and text.

Romans 12:5 says, “we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.” We must remember to care for each other. Check in on each other. Share updates with each other who may or may not receive digital updates. Pray for each other. Wash your hands for at least 30 seconds (about the time it takes to sing the Doxology – hint, hint). Remember we are in uncertain times and we are figuring out as we go. Show grace.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to myself or any members of the board.

Faithfully,

Chris Deacon

Pastor, United Parish of Bowie