

# The Vision

The Primary Weekly Communication Instrument of  
The United Baptist Church of Northern Virginia

**Pastoral Staff:**

Dr. J. Wayne Yawn, Co-Pastor  
Dr. Gerald L. Young, Co-Pastor  
Rev. Phil Carpenter, Music  
Rev. Twyla Turner, Youth  
Email: UBCEoffice@aol.com

7100 Columbia Pike  
Annandale, VA 22003-3106  
703-256-5900  
703-256-5262 (FAX)  
www.unitedbaptchurch.org  
www.unitedbaptchurch.org/Blog.html

*The United Baptist Church Vision is "to develop an intentional relationship with God, as in Jesus, so that our lives demonstrate the transforming effect and supreme importance of such a relationship for us, our society, and our world."*

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## CHURCH VOTES TO MATCH GIFTS TO HAITIAN RELIEF

At the Quarterly Membership Meeting last Sunday, the congregation approved a joint recommendation from the Finance Committee and Mission Support Team that the church agree to match any gifts by church members to relief for the victims of the Haitian earthquake up to a total of \$25,000 in UBC matching funds. The gifts will be given through Baptist World Aid, an arm of the Baptist World Alliance. BWA already has established relationships with two Baptist unions on Haiti and will work with those on the ground there to make sure the aid goes where it is needed. In order to qualify to be matched by UBC funds (which will come from investment income), *gifts must meet the following conditions:*

- 1. They must be given by a member of UBC*
- 2. They must be given through United Baptist Church and clearly designated for BWAid or Haiti Earthquake Relief.*

We will begin to receive these gifts immediately and continue as long as the need exists or until we reach the limit for matching funds of \$25,000. Use your regular offering envelope or a Pew Envelope, but please *be sure that both the envelope and your check clearly indicate the amount and that it is for Haitian Relief.* Thank you for caring and for giving.

## *Men's Hobo Dinner* *Saturday, February 6* *6:00 p.m.* *Fellowship Hall*

Calling all bums (of the male persuasion only) for our annual gathering featuring food, fun (chili this year!), and fellowship. Bring your friends with you and join us.

The evening is free, but an offering will be taken to cover the cost of the food with the balance being given to the annual Souper Bowl of Caring Hunger Offering.

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## **SOUPER BOWL OF CARING** **Sunday, February 7**

This annual event raises funds for local hunger needs. We ask that you bring staple goods on February 7, which will be distributed to ACCA and used to meet the needs of the hungry in our community. ACCA has been inundated with food requests, and the need is great. Please be generous. We also ask that you bring a monetary gift which will again be given to Westlawn Elementary School to be used by at-need students to participate in school activities they otherwise could not.

The scope of the destruction and suffering in Haiti is almost incomprehensible. Fortunately, few of us have any personal experiences to help us identify with what the people of Haiti are experiencing. As with any such event, however, we find ourselves having to face the uncomfortable questions such events raise about God. The people of Haiti are a very religious people. Most of them are Christian – largely Catholic, with a small but growing number of Protestants. But most of them also practice Voodoo, which along with Catholicism is an official state religion. These deeply religious people seem to see the hand of God in the destruction and suffering that has befallen their country. It's a message from God, said religious leaders, that he wants change. Just what change God wants, however, depends on whose talking and how God is understood to work.

Some Christians see it all as a sign from God that Haitians must recognize God's power and deepen their faith. Some followers of Voodoo noted that every major Catholic church in the capital was destroyed as were key symbols of secular power. This, they say, was God's punishment for corrupt leaders who have allowed the elite to enrich themselves while the poor majority suffers. And, of course, Pat Robertson has a word from God that it's all because the nation's slave founders made a pact with the devil, selling their souls for freedom, and the country has been cursed ever since. Then there was the Haitian man whose five children were buried in rubble who asked, *How could He (God) do this? There is no God.* And Sunday night, as downtown residents began burning some of the bodies that have been rotting on the streets for five days, a journalist observed a woman walking by in an orange dress. She pulled out a copy of the Bible... and threw it into the fire.

Anyone who has any sense of a divine being must somehow come to grips with what events such as this say about God and his (or her) nature. Does God cause such events as this one? Are children and these incredibly poor people nothing more than collateral damage as God gets revenge on the country's founders, or its current elite, or the shallowness of his followers? Is God powerless to do anything to stop such catastrophes? Or does he just not care? No parent that I know would intentionally inflict such suffering on his children. Nor would any parent I know not prevent such incredible pain if he could stop it. Neither, I believe, would the Father revealed to us by Jesus. These are all his children. The dying ones. The suffering ones. The grieving ones. The questioning ones. The ones aimlessly wandering the devastated paths of Haiti. It is so tempting to join the man who simply turns his back on the possibility of God, or to resort to simplistic answers. What's tough is to wrestle with these issues, to wrestle with God. Hope you didn't think you would get an easy answer here today. Keep wrestling.

**January**

- 20 9:00 a.m. Sandwich Ministry
- 10:30 a.m. Instrumentalist's Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
- 5:45 p.m. Begin Serving Dinner (Pork Chops)
- 6:15 p.m. Youth Missions (Twyla's Office)
- 6:30 p.m. Discipleship Study
- 7:35 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 21 1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study (Conference Room)
- 2:30 p.m. Mended Hearts Ministry
- 24 8:30 a.m. Prayer Group (Conference Room)
- 25 11:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
- 27 9:00 a.m. Sandwich Ministry
- 10:30 a.m. Instrumentalists' Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
- 3:30 p.m. Knit & Crochet Club (Parlor)
- 5:45 p.m. Begin Serving Dinner
- 6:15 p.m. Youth Missions (Twyla's Office)
- 6:30 p.m. Discipleship Study
- 7:35 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

**NEW YEAR ITEMS**

Offering envelopes for 2010 have been mailed. Many of you have received your envelopes, but many still have not. If you are among those who have not yet received your envelopes, you can stop by the church office and get a box(es). You can also get a box at church Sunday morning by asking one of the pastors as well as additional boxes for other family members by simply requesting them.

Also, please remember not to file your 2009 federal or state income tax returns before receiving your 2009 Record of Contribution from the church. These records are being prepared and will be mailed shortly. ***The IRS requires that you have these records in your possession before filing your tax return if you are going to claim your contributions as deductions on your tax return.*** When you receive your Record of Contributions statement, please look it over carefully for accuracy and completeness. If there are any problems, please contact Vanessa Giron in the church office in order to resolve the issue and get a correct copy of your statement.

***Thank you ...***

*A loving and sincere thank you to the pastors and our church family for the Christian love expressed during my sister-in-law's illness and recent death.*

*We are especially appreciative to Dr. Young for officiating at Ann's funeral.*

*A warm thank you to each one that prepared the comfort meal for our family. Your friends in Christ,*

*Mary & Elmer Shoemaker*

## Youth News...Twyla Turner

There will be Youth Missions on Jan. 20. We will be planning the work that we will be doing with the Hypothermia Center at Bailey's Crossroads for the Homeless. This activity will be a great opportunity to complete community service hours.

We will also be discussing the other community service/mission projects that we will work on this year as well as upcoming youth activities. Be present so that you can help with the planning.

### Coming in February

#### **Souper Bowl of Caring—**

Our youth will hold soup pots at church doors on Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday, February 7, 2010. They will join young people in churches across the country to collect money for those who are hungry and hurting. In 2009, over 13,000 groups participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring generating over \$10 million. All of the money collected is donated to a charity selected by the participant. None of the money is sent to the Souper Bowl of Caring headquarters. Organizers only ask that each participant report their collection so national totals can be determined and announced. Since the Souper Bowl of Caring began in 1990, more than \$60 million has gone to help people in need. Please support the youth of our church in this effort to "love our neighbors" by dropping your donation in the soup pot on February 7<sup>th</sup>.

We will be collecting food for the ACCA food pantry. At this time the most needed items are small bags of rice, dried beans, jelly and bars of soap, but any food items will be accepted. Because of the desperate need for food at ACCA due to rising demand, we would like to try to exceed our highest year of giving in the past which was 240 food items. If you start now and pick up 1-2 extra items each week, you will have 2-4 items to donate. If each of us does that, we could easily exceed our best year. It doesn't take too much from any one person, if we all pitch in. These donations can be left on a specially marked table that will be set up in the fellowship hall on February 7<sup>th</sup>.

We will also be collecting monetary donations which we donate each year to Westlawn Elementary School. These donations are used by the school to help students-in-need to be able to participate in school activities that they would not otherwise be able to join in on, by defraying some or all of the cost for the student. Drop your donation in the soup pot as you leave worship on February 7<sup>th</sup>. Those who need help may not know that you cared, but God will. And our young people are developing hearts for giving that can last a lifetime. Please support their efforts.

#### Kid's Club

The next Kid's Club activity will be on Sunday, Jan. 31 after church. We will make gifts that you can give to your Moms and Dads for Valentine's Day.

## *News of Shepherd's Center of Annandale-Springfield*

### Adventures in Learning

#### Winter 2010 Class Schedule

February 3 – March 17

Wednesday Mornings, 9:30am - 12:30pm

at John Calvin Presbyterian Church

#### **Open House/Registration**

**Wednesday, January 27, 10am - 12noon**

Three New Series:

History/World Affairs

Writing Our Life Stories

Scientific Discoveries from Space

### Lunch N' Life

**Friday, February 12, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

**PROGRAM: What Do One Billion Muslims  
Really Think?**

**Presented by Barbara Ferguson, Washington**

**Bureau Chief of Arab News**

Registration Deadline: February 3

### Chicago - A Live Musical

Friday, February 26, 8 p.m.

The Little Theater of Alexandria

Tickets: \$25.00

(Additional information about all these events are on the bulletin board in News n Do's Hallway)

The Mission Support Team wants you to know about the

### **Interfaith Community Book Discussion**

#### *Three Cups of Tea*

by Craig Mortenson

sponsored by Interfaith Communities for Dialogue

**Sunday, February 21 at 2:30 p.m.**

**Location TBA**

Book Discussion Coordinator: Geneva Pope

Questions: [dgpopo7603@verizon.net](mailto:dgpopo7603@verizon.net)

RSVP: 703-324-3453 or

CILUSER@fairfaxcounty.gov