

A BRIEF HISTORY

The United Christian Parish of Reston, Virginia, traces its roots to the Consultation On Church Union (COCU) movement of the sixties. In 1966 the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)--Capital Area, the National Capital Union Presbytery and The United Methodist Church Virginia Annual Conference affirmed a covenant for church development in Reston, Virginia, that led to an ecumenical parish. On Pentecost Sunday, June 10, 1973, the United Christian Parish (UCP) was established.

Before the Parish, Methodists (later to become United Methodists) began holding services in the New Town of Reston in December 1964, led by the Reverend J. Robert Regan, Jr., as founding pastor. In January 1967, the Redeemer facility on North Shore Drive near the Lake Anne Village Center was consecrated. In 1972, the Reverend Douglas T. Ibach, a Presbyterian (USA) minister, was called to be the founding pastor of a second congregation that began worshipping in the Hunters Woods Elementary School. The Hunters Woods facility on Colts Neck Road was opened in September 1977. The third congregation allied with the United Christian Parish started in 1979 in the South Lakes Village when the Parish called the Reverend Russell (Budd) Friend-Jones, a United Church of Christ pastor, to organize a new congregation to minister to that area of Reston. The congregation met after October 1979, in the Sunrise Valley Elementary School. The South Lakes building was completed early in 1990, and that congregation was able to meet in the latest addition to the Parish.

In 1998, the three congregations of the United Christian Parish voted in a Parish meeting "to worship and to operate" as a unified congregation, starting January 1, 1999. That unification was seen as the logical next step toward being one in Christ Jesus. The decision was made to worship at the South Lakes building. Subsequently, due to space considerations, the Parish voted to move worship and Christian Education to the Redeemer building beginning August 4, 2002. The Child Development Center program operated at both Hunters Woods and Redeemer; and the Parents Day Out program operated two classes at Redeemer. These two programs united in 2004 designated as the United Christian Parish Preschool.

In 2002, 2004, and 2006 UCP sponsored Mission trips to Bathsinda, Rawanda to work with Rev. Jupa in his country. Then in January of 2008 United Christian Parish raised over \$550,000 to help build a school in Bathsinda, Rwanda. In a combined effort with other churches a total of \$750,000 was sent to Rwanda for this project. The funds helped to build a school that enabled upwards of 900 children to be served.

Once the South Lakes (October 1, 2003) and The Hunters Woods (June 30, 2008) buildings were sold, all Parish functions moved to the Redeemer (North Shore Drive) site. Construction of a new facility and renovation of the existing building began in September 2010. The next step was to enlarge **our** facilities to encompass all of the Parish worship, education, and community services. **Although the name "Redeemer" lives on in the usage of long-time members, the community knows us now as United Christian Parish.**

Pentecost Sunday of 2012 UCP dedicated our new, debt-free Sanctuary and Education Wing, which opened for occupancy earlier in May of 2012. True to its heritage of community

service, UCP's first large event held in the new facilities was a Stop Hunger Now event on May 5 to produce 20,000 packaged meals to be sent to developing nations. In September 2012 the renovations of the original building were completed and UCP was able to use all of its facilities for the first time in four (4) years!

So much has transpired since this ecumenical experiment was formally chartered on June 10, 1973. On Pentecost Sunday in 2017 the United Christian Parish joyously celebrated its 44th anniversary.

The Parish has played an important role in the development of Reston as a Metropolitan Washington suburb, by helping to found and to guide a number of interdenominational community service agencies. The Parish has been recognized locally and nationally for breaking new ground in ecumenical ministry. Our new facilities allow us even greater freedom to continue God's work in our home area.