



Wrenderings



The Newsletter of the Harford Bird Club

Volume 28 Number 3

December, 2014

President's Perch

As many of you know, the American Birding Association (ABA) recently relocated its home office from Colorado to Delaware. As they did in Colorado, the ABA looks to start some local events that should be worth checking out. One such event is a Mid-Atlantic Bird Club Conference in February that I was invited to attend. Officers from bird clubs in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia will gather at the ABA headquarters for a discussion of the issues facing bird clubs today.

As not everyone can attend this event, I would like to solicit opinions from club members about the club. What do you think are the biggest issues facing the club now and for the future? What do we do well and how can we help other clubs achieve the same success?

For as long as I've been birding, I've heard that the club is aging and we need more youth. I think this is probably the biggest issue facing most bird clubs today. Now, I think youth outreach is one of the things that our club does very well. Do we produce a lot of birders? Not necessarily, but making that the sole measure of success misses the point in my opinion. Speaking from experience, my friends that were exposed to birds or birding as kids, whether it was a banding demonstration at Harford Glen or Spike Updegrave's biology class, have a greater awareness of birds in their daily life than people that did not have those experiences. It is here I have to thank Ruth Bergstrom, our youth coordinator, and Madeline Lovera, our education coordinator, for taking on this very important task. This is obviously an area we can continue to build upon in the future.

Another thing that I think our club does well is field trips. We offer field trips, free of charge, nearly every weekend a year. Thank you to our field trip coordinator, Tom Gibson, for maintaining that rigorous schedule. As a young birder, I rarely attended meetings, but I did attend lots of field trips. I have often seen new birders on Facebook talk about wanting to meet up with other birders and I try to promote local bird clubs. This is easy thanks to our newsletter editor, Les Eastman, and webmaster, Dick Harple. This is something any of us can do. Should we be more proactive on social media about field trip promotion?

So please, think about these questions and let's have a little discussion at our January meeting. Feel free to email me as well at hafner.matt@gmail.com. I want to hear from you! ~ Matt Hafner



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Plan Ahead!

- Dec 20—Middle River Christmas Bird Count.
- Dec 27—Annual Rock Run Christmas Bird Count.
- Jan 2—January Meeting at Churchville Presbyterian Church.
- Jan 10—Harford Youth Birding's first CBC4Kids!
- Jan 24—Winter Bird Count

Bird Droppings

Club News?

Have news the club should know about? Births, deaths, marriages, or any other notable events that belong in the newsletter? Please contact Corresponding Secretary Madeline Lovera at 410-879-6098 or email to loveblue-bird206@gmail.com.

Welcome!

A warm Harford Bird Club welcome goes out to the following new members. Thank you for joining... we look forward to seeing you out there on our birding trips and at our meetings!

- Rose and Ernie Braue of Whiteford
- Carol and Al Conrad of Bel Air
- Astrid Ermanis of Forest Hill
- Carolyn and Ed Thomson of Churchville

Some Dues Are Past Due

Some of you still have not paid your dues for the 2014-15 membership year. Members not paid by February 1 will be removed from the membership list at both the state and local level. Since the next newsletter will come out after February 1, **THIS IS THE LAST NEWSLETTER YOU WILL GET** if you don't renew your membership. If you have any questions about your membership, contact Marjie Heagy at 410-557-9485 or msheagy@zoominternet.net.

Josh Emm to Speak at January Meeting

The speaker for the January Meeting is club member Josh Emm. His program is entitled "A Great Western Road Trip." Josh will tell us the story of how he and Ryan Johnson flew to Colorado in April and roadtripped to Texas for the Great Texas Birding Classic, a six-day, 300-bird extravaganza!

The January meeting will take place on Friday the 2nd at 6:45 PM at Churchville Presbyterian Church. In case Harford County Public Schools are closed or let out early due to inclement weather, the meeting will be postponed until Friday, Jan 16th at the same start time. There will be no dinner but light refreshments will be provided.

2014 Rock Run Christmas Bird Count

The 51st annual Rock Run Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, December 27th, 2014. This event is centered around Susquehanna State Park and covers a 15-mile circle spreading inland around the lower Susquehanna River and upper bay in both Harford and Cecil Counties. Sponsored by the National Audubon Society, information about the count, it's history, previous years' results and a photo gallery can be found at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>. The Rock Run CBC is an excellent opportunity for Harford Bird Club members to have fun and build friendships while contributing to one of the largest scientific databases concerning bird populations. At the end of the afternoon, count participants may gather to warm up with good food and tales of the day's adventures. Whether you are veteran participant or a first-timer, become a citizen scientist and participate in this year's Rock Run CBC. Register today by e-mailing the HBC Count Coordinator Rick Cheicante at rickcheicante@cs.com.

Harford Bird Club Executive Board

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--|
| President | Matt Hafner | 410-971-3203 | hafner.matt@gmail.com |
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2014 Harford County Bird Count Summary

By Rick Cheicante

HBC Count Coordinator

As 2014 winds down, closing out another bird calendar year, the following is a reflection of three of our annual bird counts leading up to the end-of-year CBC: The Mid-Winter, the May and the Fall Counts.

Mid-Winter: The Mid-Winter Count took place on a frigid January 25, where the mostly sunny weather never rose above 28°F. Eighteen participants covered 11 sectors throughout Harford. The hardy group found 91 species, the most species over the last five years, and a total of 16,110 individuals.

All of the expected dabblers and bay ducks were present in normal numbers despite the frozen and iced-over water conditions in the region. Nice finds include a single **Long-tailed Duck**, an incredible 4,170 **Common Mergansers**,



a single **Red-breasted Merganser** amongst them, 141 **Common Goldeneye**, 84 **Bufflehead** and 6 **Redhead**.

Bald Eagles were at a five year high with 91. **Wild Turkeys** also showed well with 110. On an incredible note, of the 15 total owls seen, 13 of them were **Short-eared Owls** at APG. Two **Peregrine Falcons** and two **Rusty Blackbirds** were also tallied. We hit a five-year low for **American Goldfinch** at 29 individuals. To note, no blackbird mega-flocks (>10,000 individuals) were witnessed in 2014.



Frozen tundra-like fields produced few field birds, however, 2 **Eastern Meadowlarks** and 83 **Savannah Sparrows** were significant finds. We also hit a five-year high for **American Tree Sparrows** with 11.

Counters: Ruth Bergstrom, Rick Cheicante, Marty Crouse-Farley, Deidre DeRoia, Josh Emm, Alicia Farrell, Lisa Giguere, Matt Hafner, Marjie Heagy, Denise Johnson, Mark Johnson, Brian Moyer, Julio Perez, Sue Procell, Debbie Trafton, Tom Trafton, Dave Webb and Jean Wheeler.

May: The May Count took place on a pleasant, but cloudy May 10. The daytime temperatures ranged from 60 to 70°F. More than 11 participants covered 7 sectors around Harford for the spring arrival. The group found 150 species, five over the seven-year average of 145. The 2014 total individuals of 6,018 birds was also over (+10%) the seven-year average of 5,448 individuals. However, both total species and individuals were slightly down compared to the three-year average.

In what could be viewed as the “tale of two counts”, the southern sectors seemed to be a little more “birdy” than the “quieter” woodlands to the north. When compiled, both resident and migrant warblers seemed to be near normal numbers. Similarly, the expected swallows, flycatchers, thrushes, orioles, grosbeaks, etc., also seemed to be present at normal

levels. Sparrows were in good shape with **Lincoln’s** present and **Savannah** continuing an upward trend. Waterfowl, waders and shorebirds were also present in normal numbers; gulls and terns as well with a delightful three Black Terns present.

Mourning Warbler was recorded for the second straight year along with 27 other of the possible 35 warbler species. Both **Cerulean Warbler** and **Louisiana Waterthrush** were well represented in their expected locales. **Northern Parula**, **Hooded**, **Worm-eating** and **Canada Warblers** all showed well this year. Other notable finds included: two **Glossy Ibis**, two **Least Bittern**, two **King Rails**, four **Virginia Rails**, two **Sora**, two **Red-headed Woodpeckers**, 35 **Whip-poor-wills** and a **Black-billed Cuckoo**.



Counters: Josh Emm, Alicia Farrell, Lynn Feryus, Susan Hood, Tim Houghton (field trip), Dennis Kirkwood, Barb Meserve, Phil Powers, Spike Updegrave, Dave Webb and Dave Ziolkowski.

Fall: The Fall Count took place on a beautiful, sunny September 20. The daytime temperatures ranged from 60 to 76°F. More than nine participants covered 3 sectors around Harford for this fall classic. The group found 71 species totaling 885 individuals. Many thanks to the folks of Harford Glen and their bird banding station and to Tim Houghton and his field trip crew which contributed to this count.

The 2014 total individuals were just under the four-year average per sector of 322 ind./sector with 295 ind./sector. The 2014 total species of 71 was -15% against the average over the last four years.

A really nice find this year included a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** at Susquehanna SP. **Common Nighthawk** and **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** were also found. A nice collection of warblers to include **Nashville**, **Magnolia**, **Black-throated Green** and **Blackburnian Warblers** provided some splash. **Veery** and **Swainson’s Thrush** were also around as well as two **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks**. **Cedar Waxwings** were at a recent high with 42 individuals.



Eight **American Kestrels** were discovered in northern Harford, continuing a trend which has found more of these small falcons recently throughout Harford.

Counters: Ruth Bergstrom, the Heseltons, Tim Houghton (field trip), Dennis Kirkwood, Phil Powers, and Chris, Kim and Ian Ross.

I would like to thank all of the count participants for their dedicated and enthusiastic participation and contributions, and especially thank Deb Mosley for all of her time-dedicated effort in compiling count data over the last few years.



Harford Birdlife

by Monroe Harden

Early fall tends to bring us a good variety of birds in Harford County. This year was no exception. This report covers the period from October 1st through November 30th, 2014.

Geese, Ducks

DK found 2 **Cackling Geese** at Turney's Pond on Oct 28th. They were seen on various days through Nov 29th. TC and RJ saw 2 **Mute Swans** at the Edgewood Home Depot wetland on Nov 1st. JE had about 28 **Tundra Swans** on the bay near Swan Harbor on Nov 20th. DL saw a **Northern Shoveler** at the Home Depot marsh on Nov 2nd. JE also saw several at the Havre de Grace marina on Nov 20th. He saw several **Redheads**, a **Greater Scaup**, and several thousand **Ruddy Ducks** on the bay on Nov 20th. While kayaking in that area on Nov 24th, he saw 1200-1500 **Canvasback**, 300-400 **Lesser Scaup**, and about 2000 **Ruddy Ducks**. On Nov 21st, he found a drake **White-winged Scoter** on the river near Lapidum.



Grebes, Pelican, Eagles, Falcon

MJ(Ab) saw a **Horned Grebe** on the river near Susquehanna State Park on Oct 21st. DL had 1 or 2 **Pied-billed Grebes** at the Lakeside Business Park throughout the reporting period. JE found a **Brown Pelican** just downstream of Conowingo Dam on Nov 30th. Several others saw this bird there and further downstream that day. MH saw a **Golden Eagle** flying near his Forest Hill home on Nov 4th. SH saw one near Sweet Air Park on Nov 7th, while RC had one flying over APG-South on Nov 8th. GRP went out after seeing RC's report and saw the bird near Otter Point Creek a few minutes later. RB and her students saw a **Peregrine Falcon** flying over Harford Glen on Oct 14th.



Sandpipers, Gulls, Hummingbirds, Raven

TC and RJ saw 4 **Pectoral Sandpipers** at Swan Harbor on Nov 1st. JE had 6 **Dunlin** on the Susquehanna Flats on Nov 20th. He saw 7 there on Nov 24th. WB counted 60 or more **Bonaparte's Gulls** near Conowingo Dam on Nov 13th. JE saw a **Great Black-backed Gull** and a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** near the Havre de Grace Marina on Nov 20th. They were still present, with about 24 more Greaters, on Nov 24th. SH had a female **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** at her Fallston home on

Oct 8th. MW got a brief view of an unidentified hummingbird at her Webster Village home on Nov 9th. Unfortunately, it did not return. MH, AF, and JE saw a **Common Raven** flying south over Swan Harbor on Oct 13th.

Sparrows, Finches

MH, AF, and JE saw a **Vesper Sparrow** and several **Lincoln's Sparrows** at Swan Harbor on Oct 13th. TC and RJ saw 2 **Vesper Sparrows** at Perryman Park on Nov 1st. MJ(Ab) found a **Grasshopper Sparrow** there on Oct 16th. TH saw a **Nelson's Sparrow** at Swan Harbor and a **Lincoln's Sparrow** at Perryman Park on Oct 10th. DL had a **Lincoln's Sparrow** at Lakeside on Oct 12th. DK saw a **Lapland Longspur** and a **Snow Bunting** near Harford Creamery Rd on Nov 29th. He also saw 2 **Snow Buntings** nearby, off of Amoss Rd, on Nov 30th. DL saw 6 **Purple Finches** at his Abingdon feeder on Nov 2nd. SH had several at her home in Fallston on Nov 9th and 22nd. MJ (B) had several **Purple Finches** and **Pine Siskins** at his Baldwin feeders on Nov 27th. DL had 8 **Pine Siskins** at his feeder on Oct 30th.



Contributors

AF- Alicia Farrell, DK- Dennis Kirkwood, DL- Dave Larkin, GRP- Glenn Randers-Pehrson, JE- Josh Emm, MH- Matt Hafner, MJ(Ab)- Mark Johnson (Aberdeen), MJ(B)- Mark Johnson (Baldwin), MW- Marsha Webb, RB- Ruth Bergstrom, RC- Rick Cheicante, RJ- Ryan Johnson, SH- Susan Hood, TC- Tim Carney, TH- Tim Houghton, WB- Wayne Bierbaum

2015 Mid-Winter Count

The **2015 Mid-Winter Bird Count** is scheduled for Saturday, January 24th. The Mid-Winter Count is a bit more flexible than the Christmas Count in that you can bird anywhere you wish in Harford County! Feeder counts are welcome! Contact the coordinator Rick Cheicante at rickcheicante@cs.com to let him know where you will be counting to avoid overlap. Have fun, stay warm ... and good birding!

Harford Bird Club Field Trips

Field trip schedule compiled by Tom Gibson and Lynn Davis



rickcheicante@cs.com) to participate.

January 1, 2015 (Thu.) – Perryman Area. Celebrate the new year/recover from New Year's Eve by birding the always productive Perryman Area with leader Phil Powers (410-679-4116 or birdsindmd@verizon.net). Meet at the Aberdeen Wal-Mart parking lot at 8:30 AM.

January 10, 2015 (Sat.) – Feeder Tour. Join our annual feeder tour to visit the private homes of a few of our members to survey avian visitors to their bird feeders. While the birds enjoy some of their favorite foods, tour guests will also have the opportunity to enjoy some breakfast goodies. Reservations required. Locations and hosts to be determined. Details and further information will be provided via email and the HBC website.

January 10, 2015 (Sat.) – Christmas Bird Count for youth. Contact Ruth Bergstrom (443-752-1967 or ruthb22@yahoo.com) for more information.

January 17 (Sat.) – Conowingo Gull/Eagle Watch. Dennis Kirkwood (410-692-5905; Newarkfarms@gmail.com) leads this morning's survey from Fisherman's Park just below the Conowingo Dam on the Harford County side of the Susquehanna. Meet at 8:00 AM to begin the search for Bald Eagles, various gulls, waterfowl, and perhaps some prospect for a Golden Eagle.

January 24 (Sat.) – Mid Winter Bird Count. Contact the local compiler, Rick Cheicante (410-803-2712; rickcheicante@cs.com) to participate in this opportunity to measure birdlife abundance in our area. Feeder counters are especially welcome.

January 31 (Sat.) – Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge/Upper Shore/Kent Co. Late winter is prime time to visit this scenic part of Maryland's Eastern Shore. Diverse habitat provides a variety of species with a focus at this time of year on wintering waterfowl. The leader is Eric Vangrin (evangrin@msn.com). Meet at the Havre de Grace 155/I-95 Park-and-Ride at 7:30 AM.

February 7 (Sat.) – Bradenbaugh Flats. Take a pleasant tour through NW Harford County's agricultural area to find wintering field birds and waterfowl. Expect Horned Larks, Ring-necked Ducks, with a chance for Cackling Goose, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings. The trip ends at the leader's house with hot soup.



Meet at Jarrettsville Elementary School at 8:00 AM. Contact Dennis Kirkwood (410-692-5905; newarkfarms@gmail.com) for further information.

February 15 (Sun.) -- Loch Raven Reservoir. Enjoy the rich habitat of Baltimore's premier watershed for wintering migrant songbirds, waterfowl, and raptors. Meet at the Park-and-Ride on Rt.152 just north of Rt.147 near Fallston at 7:30 AM. Co-Leaders are Dave Larkin (410-569-8319; dlarkin@towson.edu) and Phil Powers (410-679-4116; birdsindmd@verizon.net).

February 21 (Sat.) – Southern NJ/ Cape May – Lewes Ferry. Journey to Southern New Jersey in search of winter residents and strays. Possible targets include Eurasian Wigeon, Orange-crowned Warbler, Harlequin Duck, both Common and King Eiders, Great Cormorant, plus many others along the Delaware Bay and the Cape May area coastline. In the afternoon we will take the 2:30 run of the Cape May – Lewes Ferry where all three scoters can be expected in addition to Northern Gannet, Common and Red-throated Loons, and a shot at potential pelagic birds as well. The birding trip is free, but CM – L Ferry charges \$27 for car and driver plus \$8 per additional adult (\$51 for a car full of four adults). Contact Russ Kovach at 443-386-4787 or Russell.kovach@gmail.com for additional information. Meet at 6:00 AM at the 155/I-95 Park-and-Ride.

Feb. 28 (Sat.) – Promenade at Havre De Grace. Meet the leaders at 9:00 at the parking lot for Tydings Park in Havre de Grace for a stroll along the Promenade and waterfront to look for wintering species including ducks, gulls, terns, etc. The walk will be followed by a lunch afterwards at the Laurrapin Grille. Contact Leaders Colleen Webster (410-459-4577; cwebster@harford.edu) and Sue Procell (410-676-6602; procell1@comcast.net) ahead of time so they can make lunch reservations.

Field Trip Reports

Paddle for Birds Trip

October 18

Nine paddlers entered the upper Chesapeake Bay on a clear morning, ready to meet the birds transitioning our summer to fall. On the way out to Tydings Island we spied **Great Blue Herons** at rest on tree tops near their rookery and were treated to two late season **Great Egrets** sharp in their whiteness along the shoreline. **Caspian** and **Forsters Terns** were also still plying the waters for fish, along with a vocal and showy **Belted Kingfisher**. The usual **Bald Eagle** show was continuing and we were lucky to be out on a migratory day for Monarchs and other butterflies that were headed in the same direction as the **Sharp-Shinned Hawk** that flew over. Our highlight was 13 **Lesser Yellowlegs** feeding on floating vegetation, content to let us paddle near and photograph. ~ *Colleen Webster*

Halloween Owl Prowl

October 31

Some people like to decorate their home with owls and bats on Halloween. Five club members and guests went outdoors on Halloween to find real owls, bats and other creatures of the night. We started at Swan Harbor with hopes set on finding a late rail or two, but save for a few waterfowl that we accidentally spooked into flight, the marshes were quiet. Just as we were about to leave



Swan Harbor, we finally heard a pair of **Great Horned Owls** along Gasheys Creek and saw a bat feeding on insects near a street light. Then we drove over to Elbow Branch at Susquehanna State Park. At Wilkinson Road, we heard a pair of **Eastern Screech-Owls** calling and caught quick

glimpses of them in flight. Then on Craigs Corner Road, we found a pair of **Barred Owls** that filled the night air with their maniacal monkey calls for the next several minutes. The dueting pair often perched right over our heads illuminated nicely by a half moon – it was the perfect ending to a memorable night. ~ *Dave Webb*

Rocks State Park

November 8

Eight eager birders gathered on a cold morning and trekked up the hill to the King and Queen Seats, stopping to admire a good variety of woodpeckers, including a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, as well as a quiet **Hermit Thrush** perched quite high. A few **Brown Creepers** moved about, some calling as they went, and a **Winter**

Wren was heard. After spending time around the ranger station and the parking lot, most of the usual residents were observed and 27 species were counted. ~ *Susan Hood*

Sweet Air (Gunpowder Falls State Park)

November 22

Six chilly souls surveyed the fields and edges on a sub-freezing day and tallied 36 species, including three inland **Ring-billed Gulls**, a **Hermit Thrush**, and a mystery bird that stayed hidden in a hedgerow but sang repeatedly like a **House Wren**. In an active sparrow area, a couple of **Chipping Sparrows** browsed, **Eastern Towhees** flashed their tails, several **Fox Sparrows** were flitting about and a few were singing. There were several raptors, including **Red-tailed** and **Red-shouldered Hawks**, one juvenile and two adult **Bald Eagles**, and the highlight was a juvenile **Northern Harrier** which made several passes by the group. ~ *Susan Hood*

Delaware Shore

December 12

Six birders set out for the annual Delaware Shore trip in very clear but windy conditions. We diverted from the typical agenda, as there were several birds of note in central Delaware. We were successful in locating a **Sandhill Crane** at Bombay Hook and also the two **Snowy Owls** at Port Mahon (which were hunkered down in the marsh, but a nice birder from Sweden had them located, standing on the fishing pier and looking back into the marsh.) Later, while investigating a potential raptor on the Port Mahon fuel tanks, we kicked up an **American Bittern** that was sitting immediately adjacent to the road - a FANTASTIC look! The raptor however ended up being a wire spool on a railing!



Later in the day, we had a **Horned Grebe** and **Peregrine Falcon** at the Ferry Terminal. A nice flock of **Pine Siskins** flew into the Cape Henlopen SP Nature Center along with quite a few **Brown-headed Nuthatch**. After a very windy walk to the point, we also spotted an adult **Great Cormorant**, in addition to both **Black** and **Surf Scoter**, plus several **Red-throated Loon** and distant **Northern Gannet**. We also located the flock of **Snow Bunting** that frequent the Cape Henlopen dunes.

Despite a blustery windy day, the birders (including 2 visitors from Silver Spring and 3 C. Milton Wright HS students!) ended with 59 species and life-birds for all attendees! ~ *Russ Kovach*

Support Our Raffle Sponsors

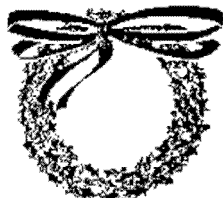
The following businesses generously donated prizes for the raffle at the last meeting. Please patronize them and thank them for their support of the club.

| | |
|------------|---|
| SEED | <h1>Wild Bird Marketplace</h1> <p><i>Operating From</i> Forest Hill Mini Storage 16 Newport Drive, Forest Hill, MD PH 410-836-5000 FX 410 692-2831 <i>e-mail: wbm@zoominternet.net</i> John and Linda Ireland, Owners</p> |
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Donated a gift certificate.

The hand-made quilts were from Paulette Jones in Edgewood.



Seasons Greetings

Harford Youth Birding

Christmas Bird Count for Kids

Swan Harbor Farm, Havre de Grace

Saturday, January 10

8:30AM-11:15AM

Join us at Swan Harbor for Harford Youth Birding's first CBC4Kids! We'll begin with binocular boot camp, then each participant, accompanied by an adult, will be part of a team led by an experienced birder. The team will record the number of bird species and individuals along a route already mapped out for you. All teams will then tally the results and we'll add the data to eBird. Teams will be divided into two age groups: 4-7 and 8-16 years old. To register or for more information, email Ruth Bergstrom at ruthb22@yahoo.com or call 443-752-1967. Scout or school groups welcome.



Prospect Mill Early Birders Nick and Harjot lead their group on a field trip behind the school.

POSTCARD FROM ARIZONA

By Les Eastman

Two scenic photos taken from the Verde Canyon Railroad





Harford Bird Club January Meeting

"A Great Western Road Trip"

by
Josh Emm

Friday, Jan 2nd, 2015

Meeting Time: 6:45 PM

(If Harford County schools are closed for the day or close early, the meeting will be postponed until Jan 16th.)

Free for all... bring a friend!

Location: Churchville Presbyterian Church
2844 Churchville Road
Churchville, MD 21028



Mail To:

If unable to deliver, please return to:
Madeline Lopera
2068 Brandy Drive
Forest Hill, MD 21050

