



Under the Dome

**Dunbar United Church of Christ
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An Open & Affirming Congregation

Weekly Services

Sunday Mornings @ 10:00 A.M.

Saturday Evenings @ 5:00 P.M.

April 2024

Pastor's Report, April 2024

Recently on Antiques Roadshow, on PBS, a young man brought a pair of shoes for appraisal. They were Nike basketball shoes signed by Michael Jordan. They were appraised at \$12,000. However, the young man was told — if he could show proof that those shoes were actually worn by Jordan in a game, then the value would increase by over a hundred thousand dollars — they'd be worth between 150,000 and 200,000 dollars! Just by proving that they were once covering the feet of Michael Jordan while he played a game in the NBA. Why is that? Why the big increase in value just by proving that the star had worn the shoes?

I love this kind of stuff. What makes something ordinary, that if it is worn or owned by a certain celebrity, makes it extraordinary? In the March 25 issue of the New Yorker magazine, there was an article, "Bid For The Stars." It talked about this. You know Freddie Mercury, the lead singer from the band Queen — in the last year his mustache comb — a tiny piece of plastic or bone or whatever — sold for almost \$200,000! Yes — close to a quarter of a million dollars. Are people crazy?

Let me share a few more of these auction details with you, because if you're even half as interested in this stuff as me — you can't get enough. In 2019, the cardigan sweater, stretched-out and looking so grungy even Goodwill probably wouldn't sell it — that was worn by Curt Cobain on his "MTV Unplugged" performance sold for more than \$400,000. Do you want to know what made it even more valuable? (I can hear you saying, "Yes, yes!!!") There was something on it, a small amount of something brown and crusty, possibly dried vomit, in a pocket. Probably had Curt's DNA on it!!! Who wouldn't want that??!! That little piece of dried, crusty thing in the pocket probably jacked up that price at least a hundred thousand dollars!

You're probably thinking now "Yes, this is very interesting, but why are we reading about it in a church newsletter?" I'll tell you, but first, since we're having so much fun, let me tell you a few more outrageous celebrity items that you won't believe what they sold for. You know the dress that Marilyn Monroe wore when she sang "Happy Birthday" to John F. Kennedy when he turned 45? In 2016 it sold at auction for five million dollars.

Cher was having an auction for some of her stuff. A specialist from Sotheby's was at her house picking out items to use in the sale, and there was something Cher threw in the trash can. The Sotheby's person picked it out of the trash — it was a table lamp made from a taxidermied armadillo — it had been a gift from Gene Simmons, whom Cher once dated. That dead-animal lamp sold at the auction for \$400,000 dollars. (At that Marilyn Monroe auction where the person paid so much for that dress she serenaded Kennedy in — someone paid \$37,000 for a Polaroid of Monroe's dog.)

Last November, Laura Woolley, the managing director Julien's Auctions, was alone in a warehouse, cataloguing some of Marilyn Monroe's items that would be coming up in an auction — some of Monroe's "intimate things" like hairpins and undergarments. Some of the bras were lumpy and misshapen because they were padded with sawdust. Handling them, Woolley felt bad, because she thought, "This is not what Marilyn would have wanted." Woolley said she "felt an overwhelming urge to apologize" — so she started talking to Marilyn. She said, "I'm so sorry that this is happening to your stuff. But I'm going to try to do it with as much respect as possible." Then Woolley said to the interviewer, "Look at me. I'm talking to a ghost in a warehouse by myself."

A professor of organizational psychology and marketing at the University of Toronto, George Newman, has studied celebrity auctions and said, "On some level, we are convinced that a

person's essence passes into the objects that he or she handles. It's nothing material," he said, "it's more like a magical belief that these objects have acquired — something. And that belief seems to have a real effect on the amount of money people are willing to pay."

And I guess this is the connection I'm thinking about. But what Newman calls "magical" might also be called "spiritual." And it's not so much the things a person owns or uses — but their words and thoughts. This is where I see the spirit. The essence of a person is passed on to us through their words and ideas, and this essence is powerful and it can change us — it can transform us. The words and ideas that occupy us all through the day and night can re-make us. When I went to the graveyard at Gettysburg, I wanted to stand where Lincoln stood when he gave his short, two and a half minute Gettysburg Address. Because I believed there was still something of Lincoln there and I thought that if I could get as close as possible to where the man actually stood, then some of him would flow into me, some of the greatness of his mind and spirit, which kept trying to bring people together, people who hated each other and would rather kill than love the other. But Lincoln kept appealing to "the better angels" in people. So I wanted to stand where Lincoln stood so some of his great spirit would come into me.

Of course, that is not necessary, and things don't work that way. The great spirit that moved in Lincoln is all around us, and especially it comes to us in words and the ideas and thoughts that we carry with us. I'm amazed that someone would pay five million dollars for a talented and beautiful woman's dress, or four hundred thousand dollars for a Goodwill sweater with vomit on it that belonged to a gifted musician — and yet the words and ideas that flowed through the lives and mouths of saints and prophets and even Jesus Christ can be summoned on Google — for free — words and ideas that still have the essence

and the power of the persons who originally spoke them which can still transfigure us into the image of God — BUT THEY SEEM TO HAVE LITTLE VALUE IN THE COMMERCE OF THE WORLD. Can you imagine how much the auction price would be if the actual robe that Jesus wore on the day of his crucifixion was discovered and put up for sale — and how that price would increase if there was evidence of his actual blood? And yet — even if it were discovered and someone wealthy enough bought it — that robe wouldn't change its new owner. But Jesus words — which do have power to change us — we all have them. Maybe we should talk to Jesus the way Laura Woolley spoke to Marilyn Monroe, something like, “Jesus — I'm sorry about what's happened to this world, and the awful way people, we, treat one another. But please help us, help me, be more like you.”

I hope you had a great Easter, and the essence and power and love of Jesus continues to rise

and live in you, love,

George

Contact Pastor George @

Phone: (203) 287 -8106 or

revonweb@sbcglobal.net

Board of Missions and Concerns

Hi Everyone,

Missions for March and April will continue to support

- 1) MS—Walk MS will be at Hammonasset Beach, April 28th - for more information you can go online WALKMS.ORG/REGISTER
- 2) Fisher House, West Haven Veterans Hospital
- 3) The Children's Tumor Foundation and
- 4) IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services)

As always if you know of a need please let us know.

Take care and Missions is wishing everyone a Happy Easter and Spring,

Donna

H.O.P.E.

H.O.P.E. would like to thank those that have donated this past month and helped us keep feeding others:

George and Janet Braen

Heather Sibley

John and Lois Kasarauskas

Charlotte and John Sroka

Paul Furgalack and Anna Tamborino

Rev. George and Janet Manukas

This month we will be donating to World Central Kitchen. WCK is first to the frontlines, providing fresh meals in response to humanitarian, climate and community crisis.

World Central Kitchen workers even built a jetty from the rubble of bombed buildings to get aid from a ship to the Gaza Strip.

If you would like to make a donation, you can do so by visiting our Dunbar website or send a check to Dunbar with HOPE in the memo.

Please help us keep up Helping Other People Eat.

Thank you,
Debbie Laffin



Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will be holding our tag sale on Saturday, April 20, 9am -12pm. If you are doing some spring cleaning, please think of us and donate to the church. We are looking for in good shape shoes & clothing and textiles (towels, sheets, tablecloths, etc.), jewelry, books, knick knacks, kitchen supplies, small appliances, lamps, artwork, toys, sporting goods, tools, and anything weird.

Please let me know if you need help dropping off/pick up. Please let me know if you are dropping off independently so I know what is for the tag sale.

We will be setting up and pricing the previous weekdays and help is always appreciated setting up and the day of the sale!

Come find a bargain!

Much appreciated,
Debbie Laffin
(203) 281-3241

Deacons

Spring greetings!

The deacons have been preparing for Easter. We welcome our wonderful church community to participate in these upcoming Holy week and Easter services.

Palm Sunday, March 24

Palms will be distributed after service on Sunday in front of the church so people not in personal attendance can come by and get them. Additional palms will be delivered to the house-bound.

Tenebrae service, Thursday, March 28 at 7:00 pm.

Good Friday Vigil, Friday, March 29 from 12:00- 3:00 pm

Easter Services

Sunrise Service on the church lawn, 6:30 am

Easter Church Service 10:00 am

Respectfully yours,
Kitty Donohue

Sunday Service 10am every Sunday is also available online via Zoom

Meeting ID 658 791 9474

Password 503008

To join by telephone, dial 929-205-6099 and enter the meeting ID. If prompted for a password, enter 503008.

Saturday Service every Saturday at 5pm
In person only

Bible Study every Wednesday via Zoom

Meeting ID 658 791 9474

Password 503008

To join by telephone, dial 929-205-6099 and enter the meeting ID. If prompted for a password, enter 503008.

The Dunbar United Church Women's Fellowship will be accepting College Scholarship Applications again this year. Forms must arrive by twelve noon on May 25th, 2024.

Applications can be found on our website.
Paper copies are available in the Narthex.

Completed applications can be emailed to
office.dunbar@gmail.com,
dropped off at church or mailed to:
Dunbar United Church of Christ
767 Benham Street
Hamden, CT 06514
attn: Scholarship

Dunbar UCC Open & Affirming Statement

We, the members of Dunbar United Church of Christ, want Jesus to be the center of our lives. Our mission is to practice the New Commandment that Jesus gave us: to love one another as he has loved us (John 13:34). We seek to follow God's will by loving our neighbors, friends and enemies alike. We seek justice for all.

We celebrate the image of God in every person. As an Open and Affirming Church, we welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of our church, and affirm that the grace of God, known especially through Jesus, is a gift meant for people of every race, color, age, ability, gender and sexual orientation. Worship, leadership, ministry, and employment are open to all.

We are on a journey of faith and invite all people to join us. No matter the church or community where your journey began, you are welcome here.

Mission Statement

“We believe that Jesus calls us to love each other, serve our neighbor, and nurture God's spirit within us.”