



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.

November 2023

Pastor's Report, November 2023

As we move into the month of November, I'd like to continue a thought from my sermon last Saturday/Sunday (10/21-22) — about the Bible being primarily a series of political statements that were then combined to make a religious book (Bible). The religions we call Judaism and Christianity grew out of that process. First came the politics, then the religion. If some of this seems repetitive of the sermon or scripture of the day that was posted on 10/22, it's good to repeat ideas that are important and often misunderstood. Many people still think politics and religion should be separated, which is — if we think about it — like trying to separate the skin from our bodies. They go together. When we speak of politics, we venture into the religious realm, even if we don't intend to. Any mention of Jesus or God or Moses or Mohammad or Buddha is political. The Holy Spirit? A world-changer. The Virgin Mary? More powerful than all the armies of Rome.

We need to look at definitions again. Because sometimes when we use words over and over, for years — we stop thinking about what they actually mean. I'm using the Oxford Dictionary (When we stop thinking, our minds, cracked and dry from years of neglect, explode like the old wineskins Jesus talked about, leaving our lives, common sense, sanity splattered all over the place.)

The dictionary says “politics” is: “the activities associated with the GOVERNANCE of a country or other area, especially the debate or conflict among individuals or parties having or hoping to achieve POWER.”

Religion is defined as “the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling POWER which involves MORAL CONDUCT (GOVERNANCE).”

The substance of both words is POWER and GOVERNANCE — or RULES FOR LIVING. Who is in charge and how we conduct

ourselves is what both religion and politics are concerned with. Go back to the first pages of the Bible and see this — God, who created everything, has the POWER and GOVERNS the behavior of Adam and Eve, especially what they can or can't eat. The Ten Commandments provide more detail and clarity. Note how important the issue of POWER is in the Ten Commandments — God says, 1) I am God, 2) there are no other gods, 3) don't misuse the name of the Lord your God, 4) keep a sabbath day each week to remember your God. The first four commands are about who has POWER — God. The other commands are about GOVERNANCE — rules for living: honor your parents, don't lie, murder, commit adultery, steal or even desire what's not yours — whatever belongs to your neighbor.

All of Jesus' teachings are also about POWER and GOVERNANCE, right conduct — he contrasts the kingdom of earth with the kingdom of heaven. Both are political entities. Religion is politics; politics is religion. Both address who has power and the rules we live by. The Lord's Prayer is probably the most political statement in the Bible. When Jesus teaches us to pray: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" — he's saying God has the POWER, and there's no difference between the kingdoms — we follow God's will in both. If we worship God, then love has to be the guiding light or energy or force behind all we do and say. Love is the POWER (God), and love is the law we follow (GOVERNANCE). Maybe at Thanksgiving we can discuss with our families and friends at the dinner table the war in Gaza and Israel, the Palestinians and the Jews, and explore how love would resolve that conflict, or even how it might be possible for us to love what we once believed was unlovable. Is it possible for us to love, as Jesus did, everyone? Stretch those wineskins!

With love, pouring Jesus into
the new wineskins of our hearts
and minds,

George

*Contact Pastor George @
Phone: (203) 287-8106 or
revonweb@sbcglobal.net*

Board of Missions and Concerns

Hi Everyone,

With the holidays coming Missions is trying to help with food insecurities. We will be donating to the Northford Food Bank, The Keefe Center, and 'rkids.

We will be donating to BoxestoBoots which makes care packages for our service members overseas. Also, we will make a donation to AFMDA (Israel's Red Cross).

The Missions Committee continues to help where needed locally, nationwide and internationally.

We wish everyone a safe, happy and healthy Thanksgiving.

Take care,

Donna and the Missions Committee

Deacons

We are looking for additional choir members. Please consider joining this important musical ministry. Our choir meets every Tuesday at 7 pm at the church.

The deacons continue to work to support members of the congregation in need. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

Respectfully yours,

Kitty Donohue

Cafe Church

Sunday, November 5th

Early Thanksgiving Cafe Church in Fellowship Hall.

Food will be served starting at 9:45am

New Haven Association United Church of Christ

The New Haven Association in the Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ invites the local churches in the southwest region to their annual Fall Meeting scheduled for November 8th at 6:30 pm at the Orange Congregational Church. A buffet of refreshments and fellowship will be followed by a Worship Service and voting meeting, where a quorum is needed.

The local churches in the southwest region are represented by our Area Conference Minister, where a covenantal relationship is essential between the local church, the Association, and the Southern New England Conference UCC in the national setting. We are richly blessed to have resources and programs and regional events from all of the above on racial Justice, environmental and climate Justice, stewardship, boundary training, fitness review, and a number of areas that concern the life of the entire Church's ministry around diversity and equity and inclusiveness.

The Executive Committee of the New Haven Association ensures that its Committee on Ministry is functioning well with its oversight of its Ministers in Discernment and its Church and Clergy subcommittee as well.

The Association's Executive Committee also ensures an annual budget, a full slate of nominees, and fall and spring all Association meetings. It ensures an Ecclesiastical Council to examine candidates for their fitness to ordained ministry, Ordinations and Installation Services for pastors, new Church Covenants and the responsible standing of churches and their authorized ministers.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Janice Touloukian
Moderator of the New Haven Association,
SNE Conference of the UCC

H.O.P.E.

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

George and Janet Braen

Heather Sibley

John and Lois Kasarauskas

Rev. George and Janet Manukas

This month we will be donating to the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen to support them during the upcoming holiday season.

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 again,

Debbie Laffin

Trustees

The Trustees met to review income and expenditures. To date all financials are within budget. We authorized the replacement of a circulator for the church heating system so that all is in order for the colder weather. We are also beginning planning for the 2024 budget.

Respectfully submitted,

John Donohue

APPLE FESTIVAL THANK YOU!

Sending a giant Thank You to everyone who helped in any way to make this Apple Festival so successful. Every booth surpassed last year! So many volunteers worked so hard at their stations and all are so appreciated!

The aPeeling peelers and holy rollers made 416 large pies and 84 mini pies this year!

Save the date:

55th Apple Festival is scheduled for October 19, 2024!

We have some unbaked and baked pies still available. Please call if you would like any for the holidays.

Our distribution to various charities will be voted on during our Souper Bowl Luncheon on February 11, 2024.

If you have any suggestions for our donations, please contact me.

Again, so thankful for all of you!

Debbie Laffin

203 281-3241





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.

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, 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.”