



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.

September 2023

Pastor's Report, September 2023

I've been thinking about a song, a lament, about a singer who struggles to overcome loneliness and poverty in New York City. People, it seems, have promised to help him but they don't keep their promises, which the singer says amount to "a pocketful of mumbles." In discouragement he realizes that ultimately, people's words are "all lies and jest," and "a man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest."

Paul Simon wrote this song and released it as a single in March, 1969. It reached number seven on Billboard's top 100. In an interview, he said it took one hundred hours to record that song. Even a bass harmonica is used on it. And a snare drum that was situated outside an elevator in a hallway, the drum hit forcefully during parts in the song, BANG! You hear it during the chorus where Simon and Garfunkel sing "Lie-la-lie" — BANG — "lie-la-lie-lie-lie-lie — lie-la-lie" — BANG — "lie-la-lie-la-lie-la-lie-la-la-lie — BANG" — and so on. I bet you didn't know that the BANG that recurs many times on that song is a snare drum hammered as hard as possible next to an elevator in an office building hallway. Anyway...

There's a last verse that was not included on the record but which Simon would sing later — when he got older:

Now the years are rolling by me— They are rockin' evenly. I am older than I once was, And younger than I'll be. That's not unusual; No, it isn't strange: After changes upon changes We are more or less the same; After changes we are more or less the same.

Why didn't he sing that on the record? Maybe it made more sense to him as he watched himself get older. There are parts of this song that still speak to me, truths that it reveals — and also — especially in the last verse, something I don't agree with because, in my experience, it's not true.

You know by now — if you read any of the stuff I write — that I'm obsessed with truth and falsehood. It's an issue that bothers me like an insect that's stuck in the middle of my back and I can't reach it and it keeps biting me. A permanent insect, an ant, in the middle of my back that bites every time I sense a lie. A little

while ago I read that Russia denies they had anything to do with Yevgeny Prigozhin's death. BITE! And many people still insist the last presidential election was stolen — BITE! That damn ant!

Why is truth and deception such a human problem? Why did God make us so corruptible? Information comes to us and the receiving apparatus in our brain bends and twists and skewers it. Remember those Boing 737 MAXs that crashed? It was because of a single malfunctioning sensor that forced them to nose dive. A tiny computer chip caused this 150,000 pound airliner to dive into the ocean at 500 miles per hour. A sensor malfunction. That's what we have, but worse. Our truth-sensors malfunction worse than the nose-diving 737 MAXs. And our country is in peril because of it. We're in dire straits, because human beings distort information from science, religion, climate-change, sexual-orientation, elections. God made us with malfunctioning truth-sensors. Yes — I'm blaming God. I know, I know — we have some responsibility. So ultimately, we are responsible — but I'm still blaming God.

Which brings me (finally) to this last verse in Paul Simon's song, The Boxer. As beautiful as it is, the last verse isn't true for me. If it were, our religion, our church life, our spirituality, would be meaningless. You can tell Paul Simon was young when he wrote this, because "after changes upon changes" we are NOT more or less the same. Our Christian faith — what Jesus taught — is that in our daily walk with him WE DO CHANGE, WE ARE NOT MORE OR LESS THE SAME. Love changes us — into love. Jesus will open our eyes and our hearts and we will know the truth and the truth will make us free. Free to what? To love — it's the only thing God put us here to learn. So keep practicing, whatever spiritual practice you have found helpful. Keep praying, and walking with Jesus. Because after changes upon changes, "it is no longer we who live, but Christ lives in us."

Yours, older than I once was,
younger than I'll be, with love,

George

Contact Pastor George @

Phone: (203) 287-8106 or

revonweb@sbcglobal.net

Board of Missions and Concerns

Hi Everyone,

Missions is continuing to support veterans (Fisher House, West Haven VA), food insecurity (Meals on Wheels, Greater New Haven Area), Habitat for Humanity (Sleeping Giant Build), Red Cross (for the fires in Maui), and an organization I saw on the news, Where the Love Is (a non profit , all volunteer, no kill shelter located in Hamden).

Take care,

Donna and the Missions Committee

Christian Education

The weather is getting cooler so that means we'll be starting Sunday School lessons again. We will begin on Sunday, September 10th. Children of the church are invited to participate in Sunday School lessons during service. We will begin the year with lessons from the Old Testament and then transition midyear to stories from the New Testament. Children do not need to attend every Sunday, but rather when they can. Parents can either let me know in advance when their child is attending, or simply show up on a Sunday morning.

This year our Sunday School kick off is different than in the past. There is no picnic this year (but there will be Cafe Church on September 3rd). Instead on September 10th the children will create something to help remind them of how God created us, and our world. I hope your child is able to join us.

Janet Manukas

APPLE PIES ARE AVAILABLE STARTING SEPTEMBER 13th!!!

Our 10" deep dish apple pies will be available fresh baked on September 13th at noon! Every Wednesday after that fresh baked, baked frozen or unbaked frozen will be available. Working on making some mini frozen baked pies as well if people are interested. Sugar free made on request as well.

Our price is still only \$12 per pie! (Word isn't even out yet and as of today we have orders for 28 pies!) Please get your pie orders in as soon as possible for pick ups on Wednesdays.

Pie orders can be called in to 203 281-3241 (or the church office 203 288-2342 to leave a message)

Thank you!
Debbie Laffin

Deacons

Summer greetings from your Deacons!

Reverend George presided over the Baptisms of Ryan John Leece, son of Michelle and Steve Leece. Ryan is Lois Kazarauskas' grandson. Welcome to Harrison Eugene Chicoine. Harrison is the son of Lindsey and Brandon Chicoine. Congratulations!

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 starting in September.

We are fortunate and thankful to have Rev. Hiram Brett and Rev. Carolyn Young, who are our Summer supply priests while Rev. George is on vacation.

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

Respectfully yours,
Kitty Donohue

H.O.P.E.

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

George and Janet Braen

John and Lois Kasarauskas

Heather Sibley

Rev. George and Janet Manukas

This month we are donating to CT Foodshare Mobile Food Pantry. Their mobile food pantry comes to Hamden twice a month on Wednesdays distributing on Circular Avenue offering fresh produce and more.

If you would like to make a donation in memory of, in honor of, as a gift for someone, or if you would just like to donate, 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 continue to monitor finances. To date, expenditures and income are aligned with budget. We replaced the toilet by the church entrance and plan to install the long awaited kitchen door shortly. Regular meetings of the Trustees will resume in September.

Respectfully submitted,

John Donohue

Apple Festival

SAVE THE DATES!!!

Our 54th Apple Festival will be held on Saturday, October 21st, 9a.m. to 1 p.m.!!

Pie making starts Wednesday, September 13th at 9a.m.!

Many jobs are still open for pie making (peeling, rolling, filling pies, packing and selling ordered pies and more) and for the Apple Festival. Please call if you have any time available to help.

Please save your better than Goodwill items for Grandma's Attic and Grandpa's Tool Shed, go through your never-wear-anymore jewelry for our Jewelry Table, saving in good condition books for our Book Sale and making items for Bazaar, Jams and Jellies and Bake Table! Please call if you need assistance with bringing anything to the church.

The Raffle Table is back and already is getting started thanks to our Apple Peeler friend, Barbara Gengarely!! Barbara has already donated themed items to go into several baskets and we can't thank her enough! If each board would like to elaborate on her great ideas (and she has been very generous) or make a basket of their own, it would be greatly appreciated! Again, thank you all who have responded so far! Let's keep this mission tradition going!

Any questions, please call,
Debbie Laffin
203 281-3241

Café Church
Sunday September 3rd at 10am
Fellowship Hall

Bible Study begins September 20th and thereafter
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.

Saturday Service begins September 23rd
and thereafter every Saturday at 5pm
In person only

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.

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.”