



# 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.**

# December 2023

## **Pastor's Report, December 2023**

Early in the Bible, just eighteen chapters into Genesis, we are given a look into the character of Abraham. God has just told Abraham that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah will be destroyed because of their wickedness. But Abraham tried to change God's mind. The deal was if Abraham could find fifty righteous people in the city, God would not destroy it. Then Abraham said, "What if I can find 45 — no — 40? How about 30? 20? 10? Abraham got God to agree to just ten righteous people. God would not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah if just ten good people could be found. Eventually God destroyed the cities because not even ten good people could be found. But the point is — Abraham revealed something about his character — he was an advocate for other people. He didn't know these people and they were foreigners. They were not of his family or his tribe and they did not worship or follow his God. And yet he still tried to save their lives. Why?

Now go to the next book of the Bible, Exodus. In chapter thirty-two, God is angry because the people of Israel were unfaithful and broke the covenant — like a marriage vow — they made with God. The people made an idol, a golden calf, and offered their worship and devotion to this piece of metal. God told Moses that because of their betrayal and unfaithfulness, God would destroy them. And what did Moses do? The people were wrong and Moses knew it. They gave their word and swore to follow God and quickly broke their promise. But despite the people's crime against God, Moses begged God to spare their lives. Moses even offered his life in exchange for the lives of the many that God was about to kill. Why? These weren't good people he was trying to protect — they had just broken a sacred promise — they had just abandoned God and turned to idol worship. But Moses begged God to take his life — so these "bad" people could live. Why?

Finally, look at chapter forty-two in the book of Job. Job has just seen God — his mind has “opened” to a vision of a larger world, and so he repents of his ignorance and the mistakes of judgment he made when he thought he knew everything, but was wrong. Now God is about to punish Job’s friends. These were three people who came to Job when Job was suffering, when Job had lost his family, his children, his property — everything, even his health. And these three men told Job that he deserved all the hardship and agony he was experiencing — because he must have done something really bad to have brought all this suffering upon himself. At the end of the book, we are told that Job’s friends were wrong and for their cruelty and ignorance and the added pain they caused Job, God would punish them. Only Job’s prayer for these three men who hurt him so badly could save them. And Job prayed for them, and so God did not punish them. The three men caused Job more suffering — and they were wrong. Despite that — Job begged God to forgive them? Why?

Because even thousands of years before Christ, Jesus is with us: Abraham begging God’s mercy for the wicked; Moses offering his life so God’s enemies could live; Job pleading God to spare his accusers the punishment they deserved. It was Jesus, the image of God in us, transfiguring hearts and minds into love, then as now. In his first sermon, from a mountain, Jesus preached: 43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Advent. Jesus coming into the world, through us. Hallelujah

George

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*Contact Pastor George @*

*Phone: (203) 287 -8106 or*

*revonweb@sbcglobal.net*

Cafe Church and Advent Workshop

Sunday, December 10th

Advent Workshop and Cafe Church in Fellowship Hall

Food will be served starting at 9:45am

## **Trustees**

The Trustees met on Nov. 19 to review financial statements and discuss activities.

To date, expenditures and income are within budgeted levels and we anticipate a carry-over into the 2024 fiscal year.

At the encouragement of our insurer, the group discussed engaging an appraiser to assess the adequacy of your current insurance policy for the church property and we will see what the cost for this looks like prior to moving forward.

We have secured a proposal for painting the church ceiling and repairing cracks in the wall, and will fine tune this proposal for consideration for the 2024 year.

We also plan to buy new, lighter-weight round tables for use in the Parish Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

John Donohue

## **Stewardship Committee**

The Pledge Drive to support next year's church budget is in full swing. To date we've received about 20 pledges. It costs more than \$150,000 each year to run the church, so every pledge is important. You can make your pledge on a pledge card (available from me, in the narthex, or you can download one from the church's website!) or you can call me or e-mail me with the amount you'd like to pledge for the coming year. In an ideal world, all pledges will be received by the middle of December so the Budget Committee and Board of Trustees can draft a budget for the annual meeting in January.

Here are answers to popular pledge drive questions:

Q - Why should I fill out a pledge card?

A - By completing and returning your pledge card, the amount you pledge will be included in the budget. The budget enables us to plan for the coming year.

Q - How much should I pledge?

A - Pledge what you are comfortable giving. If your financial situation should change during the year, you can adjust your pledge amount by just letting me or the church's treasurer know.

Q - Can I pledge on-line?

A – Yes. There is a link on the church webpage ([www.dunbarchurch.com](http://www.dunbarchurch.com)) for making donations including your pledge.

Q - How can I get a box of offertory envelopes?

A – Anyone who fills out a pledge card can receive a box of envelopes. Some people choose not to get them, and that's okay too.

Tom Parlapiano, Chairman  
Stewardship Committee

## **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

Don and Tracey Walters in memory of Barbara & Lynn Walters and Tracey's late family members

Rev. George and Janet Manukas

This month we are donating to Connecticut Foodshare for the holidays. They are trying to ensure that everyone has access to healthy food this 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 us Helping Other People Eat.

Thank you again,

Debbie Laffin

## **Deacons**

The Deacons are preparing our church for the Advent season, also our choir has been practicing beautiful songs for Christmas. The Deacons continue to work to support members of the congregation in need. Please don't hesitate to reach out, we are here to help.

Respectfully yours,

Kitty Donohue

## **Board of Missions and Concerns**

Hi Everyone,

Wanted to let you know how thankful the Northford Food Bank and the Keefe Center were for the food donations.

'Rkids were happy to add toiletries and cleaning products to their Thanksgiving baskets and Jennifer dropped off at the Xfinity store items for Boxes to Boots for our service people.

We also gave gift cards to a family that lost their home in a fire (they are so grateful for our thoughts and prayers), and to someone in recovery after surgery.

We also provided a Thanksgiving meal that was so appreciated. In December we will continue to help where there are needs during the holiday season.

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years,

Donna and the Missions Committee

## **Christian Education**

CE is happy to continue the tradition of an Advent Workshop.

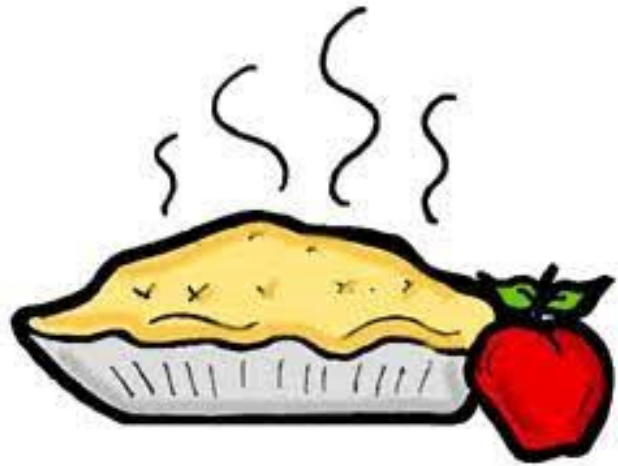
Join us on Sunday, December 10th immediately following a cafe church service. We'll be making ornaments, Christmas decorations, Draft Dodgers and more. It's always an enjoyable time for kids and adults. The snow date is December 17th.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Manukas

We still have a few of our famous apple pies available! The December price is only \$10 a pie! If you would like one, please call me and I will reserve it for you.

Debbie Laffin



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.”