



# Under the Dome

**Dunbar United Church of Christ  
767 Benham St, Hamden, CT 06514**

**Phone : (203) 288-2342**

**Email: [office.dunbar@gmail.com](mailto:office.dunbar@gmail.com)**

**[www.dunbarchurch.com](http://www.dunbarchurch.com)**

*An Open & Affirming Congregation*

## **Weekly Services**

**Sunday Mornings @ 10:00 A.M.**

**Saturday Evenings @ 5:00 P.M.**

# March 2024

## Pastor's Report, March 2024

Life has been busy these past nine days. Just last week was Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. We had the annual multi-church service this year at Grace and St. John Episcopal Church on Dixwell Avenue across the street from Hamden City Hall. In addition to Grace and St. John church, there were Mt. Carmel Congregational, Spring Glen UCC, Good Shepherd Lutheran and Dunbar. The pastor of Grace and St. John is a classically-trained musician who plays piano, and other instruments, and he assembled some other musicians, including a saxophone player, electric bass, acoustic guitar, and my electric guitar — and despite this group NEVER having played together — we rocked on some of the standard and not-too-difficult songs we joined in, including Knocking On Heaven's Door, Will The Circle Be Unbroken and Rock of Ages. You could almost call that a miracle that that part of the service, the musical dimension, worked out. In another part of the service, each minister gave a five minute mini-sermon. That was another kind-of miracle — to have a minister preach for just five minutes. If we could do that more often, maybe more people would come to church. We could make special Haiku-sermon days. (The Japanese Haiku poem has just 17 syllables in three lines of five, seven, and five). How many syllables are there in a five minute sermon? Maybe seventeen-hundred? This is an interesting idea.

Anyway, the Lenten theme was self-denial and spiritual practice with the goal of becoming more (not by our own efforts) like Jesus. My Haiku-sermon was kind-of a repeat of what I preached two years ago in Good Shepherd Church, about my prayer to become more patient. Two years ago I talked of my frustration of having to wait more than fifteen minutes at the Hamden Popeye's restaurant to pick up a fried chicken dinner for my mother-in-law (sorry mom!). I'd called in the order and it was supposed to be ready when I picked it up but when I got there I

was told that something — a computer I think — had malfunctioned and I'd needed to wait while the order was given over again. I could have found a place to wait and done centering prayer or something — said the Jesus prayer — whatever. But instead I stood there and kept looking at my watch, becoming more frustrated — impatient — as the minutes passed — almost thirty of them! When they finally handed me the bag with my fried-chicken, I felt like I'd just made the biggest sacrifice — I'd just waited thirty minutes at Popeye's for my mother-in-law. I felt as if instead of a bag of fried chicken, the Popeye's worker was handing me my cross — a thirty-minute wait — that I would carry for Jesus. Except that my attitude was terrible. Instead of leaving in peace, I was furious.

Which is silly, because we all have to wait for stuff every day. Every day we wait. I'm waiting right now to finish writing this! So I've prayed for two years asking God to please help — make me more patient. “Come on!” I beg God. “Please hurry up and make me patient! It's been two ##\$%\$&\*\*@ years for Jesus' sake!” But I'm sad to report, it's not happening. In fact, I think I'm getting worse! I've told many of you about the incident I recently had shipping a guitar at FedEx. A woman and I arrived about the same time to ship our packages but I jumped out of my car, grabbed my huge box and ran into the building ahead of the woman, almost knocking her over with my long box that had a guitar in it. So what did I save by all that rude and discourteous and shameful behavior? A few minutes? I didn't blame Janet when I got back in the car and she yelled: “Did you see what you did?!!!”

The point of all this is — is that the process of transfiguration into Christ, which is the goal of following Jesus — is a daily work-in-progress. And it takes a lifetime, with always something that will challenge us. Lent is for forty days — but that's really symbolic. Like Advent and all the other special times in the

church calendar. They're symbolic because there's really no special time to do our spiritual work, whether it's learning patience or kindness or serving others or praying in silence — whatever. WE DO OUR SPIRITUAL WORK EVERY DAY. Every day is Lent, is Easter, is Transfiguration, is Christmas. We do our practice each day, and it's best not to look for results — or it will make you like me — impatient and frustrated. Just do the work and let God take care of the miracle of dismantling our ego and filling the empty space with the mind and heart of Jesus.

So grateful to be on this trip,  
this journey with you, with  
Jesus,  
Love,  
George

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

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

## **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

Barbara Gengarely

Virginia Granquist

John and Lois Kasarauskas

Paul Furgalack and Anna Tamborino

Rev. George and Janet Manukas

This month we are donating to Action Against Hunger which is a global humanitarian organization dedicated to help end hunger around the world.

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 would like to thank all those that helped with our "famous" Souperbowl Luncheon! We had ten soups, many delicious breads, salads and more!

## **Deacons**

Greetings from your UCC Deacons!

We welcome our new members to our church community.

They are:

Jose Lopez

Onilda Lopez (Jose's daughter)

Charlotte and John Stroka

Ellen Freeman

Efren Mojica

Please wish them a warm welcome .

Deacons are preparing for Easter which comes early this year on March 31!

The Sunrise service at our church will be at 6:30 am.

Easter Church service will be at 10:00 am.

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

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

## **Christian Education**

Christian Education is looking forward to hosting our annual egg hunt after church on Easter Morning. Eggs will be "hidden" throughout the church and children and adults will be invited to collect eggs at the end of service.

So much fun!

## **Women's Fellowship**

Women's Fellowship will be sponsoring a Corned Beef Café Church on Sunday, March 17, featuring corned beef hash, Barbara Hamilton's Irish Soda Bread, and so much more! Food will be ready to serve at 9:45 with the service starting at 10a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

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 save those items. We can store them in the Parish House. 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.

Much appreciated,  
Debbie Laffin  
(203) 281-3241

## **Board of Missions and Concerns**

Hi Everyone,

To start the new year, Missions is contributing to

- 1) The American Heart Association (February is Heart month)
- 2) Tunnel to Towers Foundation (helping service members, first responders and their families)
- 3) Make-A-Wish CT
- 4) Wallingford Animal Control Center (Phyllis' son works there)
- 5) S&S gift for the Leece family (Lois and John's family)
- 6) Doctors Without Borders (in memory of Bruce Detmers)

Love and take care,  
Donna and the Missions Committee

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.

Women's Fellowship is holding its annual Tag Sale on Saturday, April 20, from 9-12. If you are doing some spring cleaning, please think of us and save those items. We can store them in the Parish House. 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.

Thank you,  
Debbie Laffin



## *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.”