



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.

May 2024

Pastor's Report, May 2024

My sermons for the past few weeks have been about the widespread misinterpretation of the Bible. Last week I told how in Mississippi, groups of Christians have raised millions of dollars to erect 14 giant crosses — 120 feet high and 64 feet wide. Though Mississippi is the poorest state in America, much of the funds to pay for these crosses have been raised from poor parishioners. What are these people being told? That Jesus wants them to build giant crosses? Who is interpreting the Bible to these congregations? And isn't there anybody saying, "What??!! That's a crazy idea!! Build crosses at a quarter of a million each in the poorest state? How about low-income housing or homeless shelters or food banks? But giant, monstrosity crosses?" There's nothing in the gospels or epistles or anywhere else in the Bible that says God wants us to build giant crosses. Why do people listen to "leaders" who make such crazy interpretations of scripture?

We would be better off to go to the Bible and read it ourselves — especially the gospels. And look at what Jesus did. And read his parables again — The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son, The Two Brothers. "Christians" doing crazy, wasteful, hideous things like building 120 foot crosses are giving our religion, Christianity, a bad reputation. OUR RELIGION IS SUPPOSED TO CHANGE US -- NOT THE LANDSCAPE!!!!!!

On April 14th I preached about a preacher in Tennessee, Greg Locke, of the Global Vision Bible Church, who shouted and screamed at his congregation (he's on YouTube and other places) "If any of you are Democrats, get out of here! You're not welcome—you demons! You can't be democrat and Christian!!!" Great. I went back to my Bible and reread the gospels just to make sure I wasn't missing something. Did Jesus say that? Did Jesus not like Democrats? Did he not like anybody? Did Jesus

ever tell anyone in his crowds to leave? It's not in Luke — not in the other gospels either. This preacher is making stuff up. If he'd read his Bible, he'd see that Jesus loves Democrats and Republicans — and Nazis and atheists and Canaanites and the centurions pounding nails into him. Pastor Locke is misinforming thousands of people in his megachurch — and his congregation is yelling “Amen!” to his lies.

But we are responsible for what we believe. The problem with the Bible is it's a difficult book to understand. It's thousands of years old, and it comes from a culture that is foreign to us. So what do we do with it? What do we do when we read that verse where Jesus tells us to hate our parents? In another verse he commands us to love each other. But he also called a Canaanite woman a dog -- that doesn't sound loving. And yet he praised her great faith and cured her daughter. In the gospels we find more contradictions than clarity—how do we make sense of it? And did Jesus really walk on water or was that story a fable about faith and trust? And if we don't believe he really walked on water, does that make us bad Christians? And will we go to hell if we don't believe that Jesus really — literally — multiplied a few loaves to feed five thousand people?

Or does our religion all come down to how we treat one another? Because, according to Jesus, we were not put here on this earth to be judges of each other but practitioners of our faith. Love one another Jesus said. He didn't say “You must believe I walked on the sea of Galilee.” He didn't say, “You must say I am lord and savior.” He didn't say, “You must habitually correct and judge your neighbor.” But he did say: "Love one another." Who is that? I suppose it's all of us—republican, democrat, people who erect hideous crosses and people who complain about people building crosses. Love one another. Three words. For something so contentious and misunderstood, our faith is -- simple.

So in the words of Bob Marley and Jesus Christ, and remembering our dear friend Phyllis,

Don't worry, about tomorrow, every little thing's going to be alright,

Love,

George

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



Board of Missions and Concerns

Hi Everyone,

Missions wants to acknowledge the passing of Phyllis. She loved being on Missions and was so passionate and cared about all we did. You will be truly missed.

This month Missions is donating with much caring to MS, Fisher House, (Veterans Hospital, West Haven), IRIS (Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services), and the Children's Tumor Foundation.

We will continue to help those in need with caring and kindness.

Take care,

Donna and our Mission members

Video Ministry Committee

The Video Ministry Committee is looking for additional volunteers to help with the streaming and recording of Sunday services (and occasional special services).

Currently, there are only three active members, which makes it difficult when someone is sick or on vacation.

It would be unfortunate if we were unable to stream a Sunday service because there is no one available to run the equipment.

Streaming the service is not difficult and the current members will help you get up to speed.

Please consider volunteering for this important part of our outreach.

Sincerely,

Joe Braen

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

Rev. George and Janet Manukas

Barbara Gengarely

This month we will be donating to IRIS (Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services) which provides groceries to new arrivals and empowers them to become self-sufficient and integrated into their new communities.

Please help us keep up Helping Other People Eat.

Thank you,
Debbie Laffin



Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship would like to thank all those that helped in any way for a very successful tag sale! We raised over \$700 for charities which will be distributed this month.

Debbie Laffin

Deacons

Spring Greetings!

The Deacons had a busy Easter season preparing the church. Thank you for those who helped out with Holy Week and Easter.

Please remember there are those that are alone. If there is anyone that you are concerned for, or you think would like a visit please let us know.

Also if there are any suggestions regarding the service, please contact any of the Deacons.

Rides are available to service to those who need them.

Kitty Donohue 203 887 9717

Respectfully yours,
The Board of Deacons

June 1 is a Celebration of Life Service for Ann Watjen at 10a.m. at the church to be followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall.

Ann and her family were a very special part of the church for decades. She will be interred in the Columbarium with her husband, Bob.



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, 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.”