



# 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.**

# April 2018

## Pastor's report, April 2018

The Odyssey, a Greek epic poem attributed to Homer, is one of the oldest works of Western literature. Scholars date it around 725 BC. In the Bible's timeline, that would put it between the prophets Elijah and Isaiah. I've wanted to read it for so long and finally got around to it.

Reading a three thousand year old story is like visiting our world during a simpler time, before i-phones, cars, and high-capacity 100 round assault rifles. I looked at life on earth thousands of years ago. What did people believe then, and how were they different from us?

Being familiar with another ancient book, the Bible, I wasn't surprised to see that people in the Odyssey three thousand years ago had feelings, desires and personalities just like us. People were just as treacherous, and noble, as we are. People, like us, were faithful and cynical. My travels through the world of the Odyssey showed me that human nature is like a chunk of granite, unchanging through millennia. Actually, a rock changes more than we do. Maybe that's why certain writings, like Homer's epic poems and scriptures of the great religions, are called "timeless." They reveal eternal truths about the human condition.

In the Bible, the author of the letter to the Ephesians says, "We aren't fighting against human enemies but against rulers, authorities, forces of cosmic darkness, and spiritual powers of evil in the heavens." In Exodus God has power to change Pharaoh's heart. In a letter to the Philippians, Paul says "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." An angel of the Lord tells Joseph in a dream to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt because King

Herod wants to kill Jesus. Chapter ten of Acts says: ““You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”

Though the Odyssey is not a religious book, it describes a similar world filled with cosmic powers and unseen spiritual forces who influence human beings. Odysseus only survived the Trojan war and his ten year ordeal of returning home to Ithaca through the help of the goddess Athena, and other spirits. He had character flaws, like pride and arrogance, but his reverence for and cooperation with spiritual forces saved him. He was a hero not because he was strong and smart but because fate had aligned him with the gods. At the book's conclusion, if Athena had not commanded Odysseus to make peace with the Ithacans, he would have killed many of the men on the island or died trying. Odysseus was a killer and peace wasn't his nature. For peace to come to his kingdom of Ithaca, the goddess Athena had to intervene.

And here we are now, living the stories of our lives, our own Odysseys. Like Odysseus, we're trying to find our way home. And we have aligned ourselves with gods and spirits who have promised to help us: money, security, weapons, medicine, fitness, beauty, comfort. Sirens tempt us with dreamy music that sidetracks us from the way, the truth and the life. Lotus eaters offer us experiences so intense and delightful, we forget why we're here. Cyclops and other foreign monsters threaten to eat us so we build walls and arms to protect ourselves. And in the midst of our epic journeys, a beggar calls us. “Follow me,” he says, “and I'll show you how to love one another. I'll change your granite hearts to flesh and

blood. You'll be praying for your enemies.”

“You're crazy!” we say. “Who do you think you are!?”

He says, “I'm God.”

Now that's a story! Homer would have loved that one!

Happy Easter,  
with much love,

George

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*Contact Pastor George @*

*Phone: (203) 287-8106 or*

*revonweb@sbcglobal.net*

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## Davenport-Dunbar Residence Home Pantry

### Items needed for the month of March:

#### Mac and Cheese



#### Peanut Butter



## **Deacons**

The Board of Deacons met on March 4th. We discussed communion service through Lent, Palm Sunday and Easter. We organized deacons participation in Tenebrae service, Good Friday Vespers and our wonderful Easter celebration. We also discussed decorating the church for Good Friday Vespers as well Easter Sunday.

Our choir has been very busy practicing songs for Easter service and remember we are always looking for new members! Our next Deacons meeting will be held April 8 following service. If there are any suggestions regarding services, please contact any of the deacons. We would also like to remind everyone that rides are available to those that need one and if anyone is unable to attend service, two of the deacons can bring communion to them.

Please call Kitty Donohue at 203-887-9717

Respectfully yours,  
The Board of Deacons

## **Missions**

For the month of March Missions is going to match the donations from One Great Hour of Sharing. They touch so many lives globally. They are committed to helping refugees, people that have been affected by weather disasters, provide food and supply water and help in so many ways.

As always we are here to help.

Thanks to everyone for their continued support.

Donna and the Missions Committee

## Women's Fellowship

Go Raibh Maith Agaibh! Thank you to all of our church community for another wonderful St. Patrick's Day Dinner! When I went to write this thank you to our volunteers, I found that it would take more than two pages alone, single spaced, to thank each person for their contribution in making this another wonderful experience at Dunbar. Dunbar members and friends working together can really make things happen! Not only was the dinner totally sold out (by 25), all the 140 attending really enjoyed the togetherness.

Our volunteers ranged from the very well experienced in life group to the terrific teenagers that helped set up, cook and clean up. What a team effort!

Thank you to all the boards for making wonderful raffle baskets! Special thank you to Barbara Hamilton, who not only made the delicious Irish Soda Bread, but donated 4 cookie baskets full of 4 dozen cookies each to the raffle table. Lois and Eleanor handled the table wonderfully and raised \$374 in just over an hour!

Big thank you to Blue Trail who made the atmosphere fun and welcoming! Great songs were enjoyed and had people bouncing in their chairs!

The proceeds from the dinner and raffle will be supporting food programs in the area.

Again, the list would be so long full of thanks that the Dome would take up three extra pages! Please know that each of you contributing at this event are truly appreciated!

Easter Sunrise Service and Breakfast: After a meaningful Sunrise Service at Hindinger's at 6:15, everyone is welcome to our Sunrise Breakfast. For your \$5 donation, you can enjoy farm scrambled eggs, rainbow pancakes, sausages, ham and pineapple, hash browns, grits, juices, coffee, tea, hot chocolates, and more.

All proceeds to H.O.P.E, Helping Other People Eat, which contributes to the Hamden Food Bank.

Rummage Sale will be held Saturday, April 28, 9-12. We will be setting up Thursday, April 26 during day, Friday night 5-7, and Saturday starting at 7 a.m.

Items can be dropped of any Sunday or call me if you need assistance at another time. Items needed are clothing, kitchen items, knick knacks, art work, garden items, household items, dishes, tools, jewelry, toys, etc. Please no electronics or encyclopedias.

Again thanks to all.

Debbie Laffin

203 281-3241

## **Trustees**

The Trustees met on March 14. We reviewed the budget and expenses, which are all in line. We discussed an option for online donations to the Church and will have more information soon. We followed up on a variety of issues: plowing of the Columbarium sidewalk, replacement of light fixtures, and the determination of appropriate signage for the wooded property on Benham Street. Other maintenance and clerical issues were also discussed. In response to the recent threatening letter received by the pastor, Kathy Straka is spearheading an Active Shooter Training presentation by the State Police, open to all local houses of worship. It has been scheduled for Saturday, June 2, from 8:30 to 11:30. Information about participant registration will be forthcoming.

Respectfully,  
John Donohue

Dunbar Women's Fellowship reminds confirmed members of the church who are graduating from high school or are already in college or an advanced program that Scholarship Applications are available online and must be received by May 15th, 2017 to be considered.

Meg Nowacki

Scholarship Chair

## **2018 Women's Yoga and Spirit Retreat at Silver Lake**

Dates: 4/20/2018 - 4/22/2018

Cost: \$190

Whether you're a yoga devotee or a novice, a seasoned singer or shy about your voice, we have a special place for you in our circle!

This will be a weekend of exploration and restoration, rather than performance and perfectionism. We will focus on using our bodies and voices as meditation in order to arrive at deeper peace and understanding.

We'll nourish our minds, bodies, and spirits so that we may return to our lives feeling more empowered and energized. We'll share new skills and tools for use throughout our lives.

Join a phenomenal group of women as we reconnect with the sacred in ourselves and each other.

To learn more, contact

[sara@centeryoga.com](mailto:sara@centeryoga.com) or [whendi@leaddog.net](mailto:whendi@leaddog.net).

## **Christian Education**

The children continue meet each month to learn more about communion. They've had lively discussions. We hope you'll be able to attend on May 6th when the children share what they've learned and assist with communion.

Special thanks to Caroline and Annie for completing a Lenten Service Project. They collected the pencils from the pews, sharpened them, and replaced them. :)

CE also had fun creating a basket for the St. Patrick's Day dinner. At times we thought the basket handles would break because we were overstuffing it! Congratulations to Mary for winning it. We're certain she'll have enough to share with her brothers.

Mark your calendars -- we'll have our annual Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, April 1st immediately following church. We will also offer a craft for the kids during Sunday School that day.

Janet Manukas

## **Mission Statement**

"We believe that Jesus calls us to love each other, serve our neighbor, and nurture God's spirit within us."