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Under the
Dome...

Dunbar United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

767 Benham Street • Hamden • CT • 06514

May, 2010

Chapter 18 in the Gospel of Matthew begins with the disciples asking Jesus, “Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” Jesus called over a child and then answered the question: “...unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Of course, since Jesus said this, people have been scratching their heads and saying, “Hmmm, what did he mean?” When we’re old (4?, 25?, after 50?) how do we change and become like a child again? After we’ve acquired some wisdom and maturity, are we supposed to lose those and act like kids again? (It seems like many adults already act like children, in the worst ways: they don’t share, they call each other names, they bully, they cry and throw tantrums when they don’t get their way. Jesus didn’t encourage that behavior.) Nicodemus tried to understand Jesus literally: He said, “How can we be a child (“born anew”) after we grow old? You mean we re-enter our mother’s womb? Really?”

What did Jesus mean? The other day Annie was at the church playground and a neighbor’s grandson was playing with her. She took too long positioning herself to go down the slide, so he pushed her. She went down the slide so fast, she flew off at the end and landed on her face, and cried. I helped her get up and said, “Are you ok?” After sobbing for a bit, she said, “He pushed me.” We talked to the boy. He was upset because Annie let someone cut in front of her and he thought this was wrong because he was waiting his turn. So we resolved that he would not push people and Annie wouldn’t let people cut in. Problem resolved, the boy and Annie still enjoy playing together.

It was interesting to me that Annie didn’t call the boy bad or evil or un-American or a socialist. She just said, “he pushed me.” It’s not just Annie -- I

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notice this with most children (especially the very young ones -- before they learn name-calling from older children and adults) -- that they can usually make up after a crisis and continue playing. Is this what Jesus meant when he said we have to change and become like children to enter the kingdom of heaven?

Maybe so. Which is why I'm so saddened when older Christians, who should know better, refuse to follow the most important teachings of Jesus, which are found in his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). That's where Jesus says "don't judge, don't worry, pray, make peace." A prominent Christian minister, Franklin Graham, was appointed to chair the National Day of Prayer Task Force. The Pentagon invited him to speak, but later "dis-invited" him because of comments he'd made about Islam. In 2001, after 9/11, Graham said that Islam "is a very evil and wicked religion." Five years later, he said he hadn't changed his mind about Islam (though his famous father, Billy, didn't agree with him).

This is a fascinating story for a number of reasons. Does Graham know that, as of 2008, there were between 3,500 and 10,000 muslims in the U.S. military -- U.S. Muslim soldiers defending our country and many risking their lives? And that there are between 2 and 7 million Muslims in the United States who work and pay taxes and raise families and worship and contribute to the general well-being of our country? In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said if we call someone a fool, we're libel to the hell of fire. Well, what are we libel to if we call 1.5 billion people, millions of whom are citizens of our own country, wicked and evil? For a prominent Christian minister, and the son of one of the greatest ministers of the 20th century, to be setting this example is sad. Imagine the fires of hostility, prejudice and hatred he is fanning.

Blessed are the peacemakers, Jesus said. And if someone is your enemy -- if someone flies jetliners into your skyscrapers and kills thousands of your people -- pray for them, Jesus said. Pray for the enemy, and do good to them. Do not return evil for evil, but return good for evil, and you will be children of your Father in Heaven, "for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the wicked."

We are not there yet. But we pray, like Paul did, that Jesus Christ will increase in us and our egos, our anger, our mean-spirit that shrinks and hardens our hearts will decrease. This could happen in our lifetime -- we could become like children again -- children before they learn to carry grudges, or seek revenge, or call names or hoard their toys. We could become like children who find ways to play and live with and care for others. It is not far away, Jesus said. The kingdom of heaven is not far away. We have already walked in its gardens.

Yours, like a child, like a flappy-jowled hound dog, howling for heaven,

George

If you or someone you know would like a call or a visit, please contact Rev. George Manukas at 287-8106 or revonweb@sbcglobal.net

Congratulations.....

Joe and Nancy Braen who are celebrating their 11th Wedding Anniversary on May 1st

Paul Furgalack & Anna Tamborino who are celebrating their 2nd Wedding Anniversary on May 17th



Happy Mother's Day!!

Dunbar UCC Open and Affirming/Mission 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.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Ted Endriss and Chuck Walters rebuilt two benches on which the wood had rotted out and broken. They were placed near the new playscape. We are looking into purchasing four new tables for Fellowship Hall, and discarding four of the worst tables on hand. We plan to store these new tables in the Janitor's Closet, so that they will not be used for "craft and finger painting" type activities.

We have met with young Kris Larsen, to review what work and materials are desired for repairing the front stairway of the Parish House. Some of the wood framing has rotted, and must be replaced, and much of the steel framework is rusting, and needs to be scraped, wire-brushed, treated, and repainted.

We are planning a Spring Cleanup of the grounds and gardens, to be held immediately after church and coffee-hour, on Sunday May 2nd. All members are invited to take part.

The JORDAN MICHAEL JACQUES

Scholarship Foundation 2010

35 Scott Street , Hamden, CT. 06514

203-676-9272

Dear Friend,

*I would like to take this time to thank all of you who have supported us in the past. This will be the ninth year that the **J.M.J. Scholarship Foundation** has been giving out awards to Hamden's elementary school children. With your help, we are honored and pleased to be able to do this again this year*

*The **J.M.J. Scholarship Foundation** was named in honor of my son Jordan. He came down with Leukemia back in 1995. He had a Bone Marrow Transplant in 1996 at Children's Hospital up in Boston Ma. Jordan and his twin sister Taylor started at Wintergreen Magnet School when it first opened. They were the first K—8th class to graduate from Wims.*

*When Jordan reached the mile-stone in 2001 of being 5 years cancer free, we decided to honor him with starting a scholarship fund in his name and give one boy and one girl from Wintergreen School an award. We later included one of Hamden's other schools and this raised the awards to two boys and two girls from each school. We have been doing this for the past four years and want to continue the tradition. We can only make this happen with your help. Please send your tax deductible donation to the **J.M.J. Scholarship Foundation**, 35 Scott Street, Hamden, Ct. 06514.*

This year Jordan turned 17 years old and remains cancer free. He is in his second year at Hamden High School. He remains committed to helping those in need. His past accomplishments included: Ct Rep for the Jimmy Fund Clinic, Bob's Stores, American Red Cross, Relay for Life(Cancer Society) KC101 Home –Town Hero and Hamden Notable to name a few.

*If you have any questions regarding the **J.M.J. Scholarship Foundation**, please feel free to call me at 203-676-9272. Thank You from the bottom of my heart,*

Paul C. Jacques

Women's Fellowship

Our Rummage Sale was held on Saturday, April 17th netted us \$350.00!! The money will be used to help buy some new tables for the Fellowship Hall to replace the old and saddest looking ones!! THANKS to all who donated items to this effort and to all who helped to set up, sell and remove left overs....especially Deb Laffin!!

We will hold a work meeting on April 28th and on May 12th & 26th at 9:30am in the Fellowship Hall.

Our June "covered dish" supper and meeting will be held on June 9th @ 6:00pm!! SAVE the date and do plan to join us!!

A reminder that Women's Fellowship will pay the registration fee for all youth who will attend Silver Lake Camp in the beautiful hills of Northwest Connecticut!! There are various themes for the different weeks and are a wonderful experience. Do think of attending – see large flyer hanging in the Narthex for further information or call Tim Hughes @ 860-364-5526 or www.silverlakect.org.

Another reminder: Deadline for DUCC Scholarship is May 15th !!

Thank you!

Active Members or Children of Active Members may apply --

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Alternate Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Active Member of Dunbar United Church of Christ? _____ **Yes** - Date Joined _____**If no,** Name of Active Member Parent(s) Member's Name _____College or other schools attended:
_____Did you Graduate? _____ **Yes** _____ **No**
Year _____ Degree _____ Major _____Name and address of school you plan on attending in September:

Full Time? _____ Yes

Part Time? _____ Yes - Number of Courses _____

Type of School:

_____ Seminary _____ 4 year College _____ 2 year College _____ Technical _____ Secretarial

_____ Nursing _____ Other/Explain _____

Please write a short essay, and attach, covering at least the following points:

1. What field you plan to study
2. Your future career plans
3. Why you applied for this scholarship

Mail to the Dunbar United Church of Christ, Attention: President of the Women's Fellowship -

Deadline for receipt: May 15th.

Scholarships awarded will be paid directly to the applicant

In case the recipient fails to pursue stated educational plans, it is incumbent on the recipient to return the scholarship money awarded for that year

Your Signature