



# 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 2018**

# Pastor's report, May 2018

A few years ago Annie and I read the seven Harry Potter novels. She liked them so much that she wants to go back and reread them. We're on the second one now, the Chamber of Secrets.

When these books first came out, some Christian groups complained that they should be boycotted and burned "because they're pagan and encourage witchcraft and magic and sorcery, which according to the Bible are evil," etc., etc. Probably these people boycotting Harry Potter haven't actually read the books, because they are not really about magic at all, or witchcraft or paganism. The seven Harry Potter novels are primarily about good and evil, and how these forces work to shape a person's character, and the world. The main shape the evil takes, from the time Harry is an infant to when he is an adult, is racism. People are born either wizards (people with magic) or muggles (people without magic). Or they are "half-bloods" where one parent has magic and one doesn't.

Harry is the child of a half-blood witch (his mother was magical but was muggle-born, meaning one of her parents did not have magic powers). His father was a pureblood wizard, but since Harry's mother has muggle blood, he was considered a half-blood wizard. The villain of the series, Lord Voldemort, is also a half-blood wizard, though Voldemort is ashamed of his muggle heritage and hides this part of his history from others. He creates an alternative history with alternative facts so people think he is a pureblood. A sub-theme in the Potter novels is the corrupting influences power has on people and the constant need of the powerful to hide or conceal truth by re-writing history.

If you want to read an interesting short story, read the Wikipedia account of J.K. Rowling's life. She's about 52 now and she brought the first Harry Potter book to publishers in 1998. She sent the book to 12 publishing houses and every one rejected it. Finally a publisher accepted it not because he liked it or thought it would succeed but because his 8 year old daughter got a hold of it and read it and demanded that her father publish the book!!!! Which he did mostly to keep peace with his daughter so he only published a thousand copies, certain that the book would fail.

Here we are 20 years later and Rowling, who once survived on the welfare checks she received, is paid about 95 million dollars a year from the Harry Potter books and businesses that have sprung from them (Rowling gives much of this to charities that help poverty, single mothers, and MS). I'm glad the books succeeded because statistics show that fewer and fewer children are reading today because they are so hooked on their electronic devices. And as entertaining as the Potter movies are, they do not go into the depth of the human sin of bigotry and racism that the books do. Again, the thread that runs through all seven of these novels is blood, pure blood and half-blood and the war of the pure-bloods, led by the villain Voldemort, to kill and enslave the half-bloods and muggles. Pure-bloods call muggles "mudbloods" -- the equivalent in the Harry Potter universe of our n-word.

The next time you read the Old Testament, or the Gospels, look at the role that race and the conflict between races plays in all of these stories that have shaped our faith and determined the character of our souls. Abraham, the father of three religions, Judaism, Christianity

and Islam, was called to leave his home and his people. Our God is not a God of any one race or place. Abraham wandered, never really settling down. Moses also left the place of his birth, and never “arrived” at the promised land. Jesus left his home and his people at Nazareth, and “never had a place to lay his head.” He died hanging between heaven and earth, homeless. Isn’t it amazing that the first sermon he preached when he went to his hometown Nazareth for a visit was about God’s blessing to people of other races! And he told his hometown, Jewish congregation that their enemies would go to heaven before them! No wonder they tried, unsuccessfully, to kill him that afternoon.

Like Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus -- and Harry Potter -- we have to leave our homes and the people who first shaped us and we have to step into the wider universe of all God’s creation, which we are told in the first pages of Genesis, is Good -- all of it, and at their core, every person. We are all good, and blessed, and loved by God. This is the way and the truth and the life that Jesus revealed. Our call as Jesus’ friends is to continue to carry the light of this revelation into the dark corners of this glorious world.

yours,  
by the grace of God’s love,

George

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*Contact Pastor George @*

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## **Deacons**

Next Deacons meeting May 6 after service. I want to thank all the Deacons who helped make coffee hour a success for the month of April.

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**

As always we try to make contributions that touch peoples lives. We have donated to Hamden's Earth Day event like we did last year. This year we made a donation to Be The Match Foundation, that will help add potential donors to the bone marrow registry. Also, I will be participating in the MSWalk Sunday the 29th of April and missions is contributing to a cause that affects so many .

Our goal is to help make a difference .

With hope and love,  
Your Missions Committee

## Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship would like to thank the wonderful early bird volunteers who set up, cooked and served the Easter Sunrise Breakfast! Even after a chilly but wonderful Easter Sunrise Service, we served 47 people with scrambled eggs, sausages, ham with pineapple, hash browns, pancakes (rainbow and natural) and Kathy's wonderful grits! Thanks again to Flowers From the Farm for the freshest eggs! Special shout out to John Kasauraskas for saving the day making wonderful pancakes with just a day's notice!

Our most handsome and talented male cooks (Gordon Ramsey has nothing on them!) will be making their famous Mother's Day Brunch! Everyone is invited with their families to enjoy this delicious brunch served directly after the Sunday service on Mother's Day, May 13. No charge, all welcome, come join us for this celebration!

Dates to remember:

**Saturday, June 2**, Active Aggressive Training. 8:30- 11:30. Welcome breakfast served 8:30, training starts at 9a.m.

**Sunday, June 10** , End of the Year picnic directly after Sunday service. Hotdogs, hamburgers, and our new apple chicken for tasting cooked on our new charcoal grill. All welcome.

Please note that the Apple Festival Date has been changed to Saturday, October 20, 9-3 to celebrate our 50th Festival. We are hoping for better weather and not interfere with Halloween weekend.

Thanks,  
Debbie

## Trustees

The Trustees have been working on both routine maintenance issues (trees needing removal, etc.) as well as more significant and strategic issues. A prominent effort is being spearheaded by Kathy Starka--an active shooter training event presented by the State Police. It will be held on June 2 and we are conducting outreach to invite interested representatives from local houses of worship. We are also working to prioritize our list of capital improvements for this year now that the good weather has (hopefully arrived). The Trustees are also discussing the possibility of a website redesign to enhance our church's visibility in the community and to better serve members. More information will be forthcoming. In financial terms, we are in a good position in terms of pledges and expenditures are generally in line with the budget.

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, 2018 to be considered.

Meg Nowacki

Scholarship Chair

## Davenport-Dunbar Residence Home Pantry

Items needed for the month of May:

Mac and Cheese

Peanut Butter



## **Christian Education**

The children who have been learning about communion over the past few months will be helping to serve communion on May 6th.

Save the date—the last day of Sunday School will be June 10th. CE will have a bounce house for kids of all ages to enjoy at the Trustees picnic, together with lawn games for those of us who prefer not to bounce

Janet Manukas



## **Mission Statement**

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