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Under the Dome...

Dunbar United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

767 Benham Street • Hamden, • CT • 06514

Summer, 2010

We begin this July edition of the Dome with a Bible trivia quiz. Who said, "God helps those who help themselves?" Isaiah? St. Paul? Jesus? Actually, that quote is from an article that an English politician named Algernon Sydney wrote in 1698 called "Discourses Concerning Government." Later, Ben Franklin quoted Sydney in his book "Poor Richard's Almanac," published in 1757. Practically speaking, both men were atheists so of course they would put their faith in themselves and not in God.

Those who attribute this quote to the Bible probably never read it too closely because the Bible teaches the exact opposite of "God Helps Those Who Help Themselves." According to our scriptures, God helps us when we **don't** trust in ourselves. Listen to Jeremiah (17:5): "Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength....They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land." And why can't we help ourselves? Because, Jeremiah continues, "The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse -- who can understand it?" The Biblical view of human enterprise is pessimistic. Proverbs says, simply (28:26): "Those who trust in their own wits are fools...."

Then who should we trust? If we can't help ourselves, who will help us? "Trust in the Lord with all your heart," advises

Proverbs (3:5) “and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge the Lord, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.” Jesus said: “Take my yoke upon you (paraphrase: do it my way), and learn from me....and you will find rest for your souls.” Those who help themselves don’t need God. The people who help themselves are the bankers who steal on Wall Street, the oil executives making huge profits while ruining the environment. People who help themselves are government leaders who lie and start wars they can’t stop, who bankrupt their country while their own fortunes increase. People who help themselves justify the torture and humiliation and murder of others. People who help themselves deny health care to people who can’t afford it; they arrest illegal immigrants and send them back to lives of misery. People who help themselves look at their investment portfolios, proud of their success. In their arrogance they say to the poor, the welfare people, the immigrants, the uninsured: “God helps those who help themselves.” But that’s not what the Bible teaches. It’s not God but the devil who helps those who help themselves. The devil says “Take care of yourself and don’t worry about the others. Let them suffer. After all, they have the same opportunity to help themselves as you do. If they don’t, they’re just lazy. Forget them.” That’s the devil talking, not God. Can you imagine Jesus saying anything like that?

Jesus told a story once about a man who helped himself. He saved all his money. He built silos and stored all the grain he grew. He became rich. Then he looked at all his hard work had accomplished, all he had: his estate, his servants, his money. He was proud that he did it by himself -- pulled himself up by his own bootstraps. Then he said, “I’ll retire now and enjoy these wonderful things. After all, I’m entitled to it -- I did it with my own two hands.” Suddenly an angel came and said, “I’ve come to take you to the next life. You’ve been such an idiot, looking to your own interests - - helping yourself and disregarding the poor and the suffering. You

fool -- you wasted a whole life in self-interest and neglected the unfortunate people that God put you here to serve (my paraphrase).”

So please, next time you hear some dim, deluded soul tell you that God helps those who help themselves, say: “Get behind me Satan!” And get it right: God helps those who help others, especially “the least of these:” the beggars, the poor, the unemployed, the illegal immigrant, the uninsured, the prisoner, the convict. “Feed my lambs,” Jesus said, “feed my sheep.”

Yours, in a hot town, in the summer, in the city --
back of my neck getting burnt and gritty....

George



Please contact Rev. Manukas if you or someone you know would like a call or a visit @ 287-8106 or revonweb@sbcglobal.net

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.

Christian Education

Greetings!

Happy summer from the Christian Education Board. We launched our "Summer Storytime Sundays" program last week. It was lots of fun! The program is held during our church service. Immediately following Children's Time, we meet at the playground picnic table for a bible story, craft, and snack. There's time for playscape fun as well!

We will also be tending to Dunbar's "Feed the Hungry" garden. Last week we planted squash, tomatoes, and bush beans. Thanks to the Endriss family for their generous donation of lovely vegetable plants and for the installation of the garden fence and gate.

The harvest will go to area homeless support groups such as the Amistad House or Life Haven. Both programs work to feed, clothe, and provide shelter and support to homeless men, women, and children in our surrounding community. Dunbar's youth are happy to help and just a few weeks ago made beautiful placemats for the diners at Amistad House.

Vacation Bible School will be held on Sunday, July 11th from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm.

The program will include a congregation-wide pot luck brunch beginning right after service (about 11:00 am), so bring a dish to share and enjoy fellowship with Dunbar's youth.

The VBS program is open to all youngsters, members or not. Children are encouraged to bring a friend. We would appreciate pre-registration for the program, so we know how many will be attending. Registration forms will be in the Narthex and posted on our website, www.dunbarchurch.com.

As always, extra hands make for light work and more fun! If you can lend a hand with our programs, we would appreciate it. Also consider a commitment of 45 minutes a month during next church school year as we're looking for teachers to continue with our youth ministry. Give me a call if you have any suggestions/questions. Cindy @203-415-8940.

Respectfully Submitted, Cindy Long, Christian Education Chair

Christian Education Happenings

Summer Storytime Sundays at the playscape - Join us for a story, snack, and craft. We'll tend to our vegetable garden and have fun on the playscape, too! Also looking for volunteers-please call Cindy, 203-415-8940.

Vacation Bible School, July 11, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm. Includes a Congregation-wide Pot Luck Brunch at 11:00 am. Please bring a dish and enjoy some VBS fun! Also looking for volunteers-please call Cindy, 203-415-8940.

Thanks, Cindy

We'll be having a Crafters Time on the Third Saturday of each month starting in the fall!

It is open to all crafty members and friends of Dunbar UCC!! Drop by or stay the whole time -- We'll be crafting from 10:00 to 2:00 in the Parish House.

Bring your own project -- crocheting, knitting, quilting, embroidery, etc. -- we have tables, comfy chairs and plenty of conversation starters.

Enjoy coffee, tea, water and a light lunch.

No commitments necessary -- You can be an occasional user or a long-time abuser!

If coming, please let Barbara Hamilton (phone: 288-0762/email: booheny@sbcglobal.net) or Janet Manukas (phone: 287-8106/email: janetmanukas@earthlink.net)

Board of Missions and Concerns

This past month the Board of Missions and Concerns was able to help the Amistad House in New Haven. Amistad House is a nonprofit organization that serves breakfast Monday through Friday and dinner Sunday through Thursday. They also offer the use of their washing machines and dryers to anyone who needs it. They serve between 25 and 40 breakfasts and 10 to

20 dinners each day. Because they run on donations, they were in danger of having the electric shut off. Missions was able to give \$100 towards their electric bill. Olga Dryfoos and Deb Laffin also gave to the electric bill bringing the total to \$170. In addition, Deb Laffin went shopping (I'm still amazed at the deals she got) and was able to beef, chicken, potatoes, pasta, fruit, pancake mix, syrup, cereal and many other items. Missions donated \$50 towards the cost of food, Deb covered the rest. Janet Manukas donated many food items from her own pantry. A big thank you to Deb for doing all the organizing and running around to help out this very worthy cause. If anyone is interested in adding to the donations, please see Deb Laffin or Nancy Braen. Amistad House can always use help with their electric bill, but are also in need of food and clothing.

Respectfully,
Nancy Braen

Scholarship Report

The Scholarship Committee met in May and received seven applications from young people beginning or continuing their college educations. Each will receive \$500 checks in August with funding coming primarily from Women's Fellowship funds with some from the church's operating budget and some from Memorial Gifts. The students were recognized in church on Sunday, June 13th.

Jennifer Browning, (one of Kris Larsen's granddaughters) wants to open a child day care eventually or be a teacher. She plans to attend Gateway Community College before transferring Southern Connecticut State University.

Gary Burbuckler is planning on majoring in nursing at Fairfield University where he is considering a career as a Physicians Assistant. He thanks the church for memories of Advent, the Apple Festival, summer picnics, etc. and as a Sunday School Teacher.

Kara Burbuckler has a passion for animals and wants to pursue a career as a veterinary technician. She will be attending Middlesex Community College and transferring later to Northwestern Community College in Winstead.

Leslie Hurd will be a senior at Marist College majoring in psychology and plans a career as a child psychologist. She has been accepted in their 5 year Bachelor/Masters program. She spent her junior year in Australia.

Michelle Kresta continues full time at Quinnipiac University studying diagnostic imaging hoping to work in a hospital setting with young children and new mothers.

Robert Pascarella will be returning to McGill University in Canada where he is majoring in economics, plans to attend law school and would like to become a public defender – defense attorney.

Cara Peterson will be a senior at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she has been studying global health and the continent of Africa, and plans to study global ecology and environmental law. She studied in Mali last year and is in Rwanda this summer. She plans to concentrate on a career connecting resources and skills people need to take care of themselves and their families in sustainable ways that do not contribute to the ongoing destruction of nature.

We wish them continued success in their studies. Funds to sustain our ability to offer these scholarships rely on your support of Women's Fellowship programs, particularly the Apple Festival and rummage sale. In addition, we welcome gifts to the Memorial Fund in memory or honor of a loved one as well as donations in the offering plate (specially marked for this program).

*Meg Nowacki
Scholarship Chair*

DUCC Deacons Meeting • June 13, 2010

Pastor's Report

- **Pastor George spoke about and up-dated us on the next confirmation class.**
- ***The Trauners- Baby Douglas will be baptized August 15th***
- ***Pastor George up-dated us on his vacation at the end of June and asked if Paul***
- ***Jacques was available to do the Saturday service when he is away. Paul said yes.***
- ***Pastor George noted that deacons Mark & Bel were on vacation this week.***

Chairman's Report

- **July's Communion servers are Kattie Straka & Betty Detmers.**
- **We all discussed and agreed that there will be no meetings for July & August. We will meet again September 12.**
- **We discussed Pastor's Time Off and notice will be passed on to the board so that any arrangements we need to make can be done. (Paul & Nicole will do the service on June 26)**
- **We discussed Music during services and all agreed that no matter what or who performs.....Deacon Heather Sibly will be notified and the info will be brought to the full board.**
- **The Deacon's e-mail/tele# list was up-dated so all deacons get information passed along to them. It was also discussed and agreed upon that if any deacon is scheduled to serve and cannot....they will notify Paul, Chris or Pastor so other arrangements can be made.**
- **July Communion was discussed and agreed upon that we move it from July 4.....to July 11 due to the holiday.**
- **We went over the Communion Calendar and it was noted again that when we serve communion (or when we can't and have someone fill in) we are to be the greeters for that month.**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: The Trustees thank all those who made the “end of Church School” picnic such a success. To all those who brought salads, soda, desserts, cooked the hot dogs and hamburgs, helped in setting up and cleaning up, we couldn’t have done this without your help.

With the generous support of the pledge drive for 2010, we will be able to do considerable “catching up” on deferred maintenance to the church, Parish House and Pastor’s House. We have windows to repair or replace, chimney repairs, leaking gutters and downspouts, and other similar minor repairs and maintenance to accomplish.

WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP: We met on June 9th, and worked on items for our Apple Festival Bazaar Table, the profits from which will go towards support of our Missions Projects. We plan to hold work meetings on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays during the summer, at 9:30 AM, in Fellowship Hall.

Our thanks to Meg Nowacki for her informative introductions, and presentation of Dunbar Scholarships to, the 7 recipients during the Sunday, June 13th Worship Service. Our congratulations to all of them, and best wishes for their future endeavours. (See Meg’s report on Scholarships.)

We will be starting to make our Apple Pies on Wednesday, September 8th, at 9:30 AM. This will continue every Wednesday until the Apple Festival, which will be on Saturday, October 23rd this year. We hope to see many of you there, to help out in this big endeavor to raise money for our Scholarships and Mission Giving.

I’m still anxiously waiting to hear from someone willing to become President of this organization! Please call me at 203 288-9781.

Barbara Walters,
President.

HALL RENTAL INFORMATION

The DUCC's Fellowship hall is available to rent for all your special occasions! The hall provides a comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere for your wedding and reception, birthday party, business meeting, anniversary celebration, retirement party, or any other event you have planned. The hall can hold approximately 240 people, or 180 seated at either round or rectangular tables with chairs. Facilities include a full kitchen and a serving area for food and other refreshments, room for a live band or DJ, and lighting options to create the perfect mood for your affair.

The hall is totally non-smoking and alcohol free to provide our guests with a comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere.

Some of the more popular dates, especially weekends around the Christmas holidays, are reserved months in advance, so don't delay. Visit us at 767 Benham Street, Hamden, CT 06514 or call (203) 288-2342 for more information. Ask for Geneene Luedee, Church Secretary and mention that you got the number from our website. We look forward to welcoming you as our guest and accommodating any special needs you have.

HALL RENTAL COSTS

The use of the hall is at no charge for DUCC Members!

The following are the DUCC's Fellowship hall rental costs:

Basic Rental (1/2 Day, 4 hours) \$200.00

Basic Rental (Full Day, 8 hours) \$275.00

Security Deposit (reserves date and time) \$50.00

Custodial Fee (Included) \$75 *non refundable for weddings and funerals

Church Custodian (If required) \$10/hour

(The basic rental includes up to 2 hours earlier on the day of the event for

set-up, table and chair arrangement, caterer and band/DJ prep time, and up to 1 hour after the event for band/DJ equipment removal)

For more information or to schedule a date and time to visit or reserve the hall, call (203) 288-2342

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