



Under the Dome

**Dunbar United Church of Christ
767 Benham St, Hamden, CT 06514**

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www.dunbarchurch.com

An Open & Affirming Congregation

Weekly Services

Sunday Mornings @ 10:00 A.M.

Saturday Evenings @ 5:00 P.M.

April 2025

Pastor's Report, April 2025

LENTEN MEDITATION ON A RACCOON

Last night from the living room window I saw a raccoon cross Dunbar Hill Road. It came out of the woods there in that grassy area between the fire house and Benham Street. A beautiful one of God's creatures, and I was sorry it didn't have more natural habitat to do his night hunting. I would have to be alert a few hours later when I took Gideon out for his evening walk. I feel safer encountering larger wild animals from a distance.

Speaking of living with animals, did you hear the story — there was a book and movie about it — of the young man who grew up in the Northern Virginia suburbs and graduated from Emory University in Georgia, and sought an increasingly nomadic lifestyle. Eventually he hitchhiked to Alaska and settled there in the wilderness, alone. He found an abandoned Fairbanks City Transit System bus and lived in that. He kept a journal, which is why we got to know about him. He was about 24 when he died. Eventually he ate some berries that were toxic and it ruined his organs and he starved to death there on the bus. He kept taking pictures of himself, and writing, till the end. In the last pictures he looked like a prisoner at Auschwitz, yet he was smiling. He loved that life, there with the animals and trees and rivers.

His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He called himself Alexander Supertramp. The biographical book about him is *Into The Wild* by Jon Krakauer and it was later made into a movie by Sean Penn. (There's another movie I recommend you see — and read the book.)

Even if McCandless had survived into old age, I would not have wanted to trade places with him, I'm so domesticated. I will only go to Alaska and live with the moose and grizzly only in my imagination. At night when I walk Gideon I imagine going out to sit quietly in the woods to see the raccoons and skunks and owls and foxes hunting. (But I wish, when God made everything, that we didn't have to eat each other. I'm sorry animals eat animals. It's awful when you think

about it. Millions of practicing Buddhists vow not to kill anything — anything, even the mosquito sucking their blood. They don't eat meat. It's too bad Christianity hasn't evolved into that consciousness of not killing.)

There are reality shows about people living in Alaska and they're fascinating but I don't watch them any more because it seems the people in these places spend most of their time killing other animals for food. I can't stand to watch that. Yes, I know, I eat meat! And somebody has to kill those poor animals I eat. I'm a terrible Buddhist.

The translation of Genesis 1:28 is unfortunate and has caused misunderstanding and abuse. We are told in the preceding verses that God made everything — and everything was good. And then God said to the man and woman who were just created — in the divine image: “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground.”

The unfortunate misunderstanding of this passage is from the word “subdue” and “have dominion” over it. God told us we are responsible for the earth and all that is on it — all living things, all minerals, waters — everything. But a better translation for “subdue” is “stewardship.” “Subdue it” is mistakenly interpreted to mean we can take our rifle out and shoot whatever we want. We can dump whatever we want in the water. We can clear the whole Amazon rainforest if we want. Because we “rule over it.” We can subdue things, we think, according to our will. But that's not what the Bible says. The creation is sacred — a reflection of God — and we are to be stewards of it, with reverence. We have strayed so far off God's intended course for us. The current administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency is Lee Zeldin. He recently announced his intention to roll back dozens of environmental rules and to cut his agency's spending by two-thirds. In a two-minute video released in early March, he said he would work to “lower the cost of living by making it cheaper to buy a car, heat a home, and run a business.” But he made no comment on protecting the environment or public health. He plans to rescind laws curbing carbon emissions in factories and cars, and open up more land in Alaska for oil drilling.

Even a superficial reading of the Bible will show it was not God's intention for us to take the gift of the earth and sky and ruin it. Pope Francis, the greatest pope in my lifetime, said, simply, "The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth." He blames politicians for listening more to oil industry interests than Scripture or common sense.

We need to pray now, now in this season of Lent as we seek to walk more closely with Jesus, for a mind and heart that will love the earth and the animals and plants — and each other. We need a resurrection of the spirit of Jesus Christ in our mind and heart.

Look at what can happen, without warning, mindlessly sitting in a living room at dusk and seeing God in the form of a raccoon, crossing Dunbar Hill Road. A free-association-Lenten-meditation on the environment, and our stewardship of this sacred gift, and the renewal of our spirit. God talks to us — tries to reach us — all the time. Thank you God, Jesus, brother raccoon.

Yours in the hallowed twilight,
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, 2025.

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

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will be holding our annual Tag Sale on Saturday, April 5th, from 9am-12noon. Donations being accepted are: jewelry, watches, working small appliances, working vacuums and irons, kitchen goods, glassware, utensils, small furniture, toys, puzzles, shoes in good shape, clothes in good shape, towels, sheets, blankets, purses, tools, pictures, frames, baskets, dishes, knick knacks, books, computer games, records, garden items, unopened perfumes, unopened soaps, unopened shampoos, storage containers, and anything weird! If you are dropping off items to the church, please mark them tag sale.

We'll be setting up during the day April 2, 3, & 4, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Approximate hours for set up are starting at 11a.m. each day.

If you need help dropping things off, please call.

Debbie

203 281-3241

Board of Missions and Concerns

Hi Everyone, The Missions Committee continue to support these organizations:

- 1) The Keefe Center (food donations)
- 2) Interfaith CareGivers of Greater New Haven (They provide free food, rides and support wellness for seniors.)
- 3) EasterSeals Veterans Rally Point (They serve those that have served.)
- 4) House of Heroes CT (They help renovate homes for disabled veterans.)
- 5) Edesia Nutrition (Plumpy'Nut is a nutritional supplement to help the most vulnerable children of the world to end malnutrition)

As always ,please let us know if you know of a need.

Take care,

Donna and the Missions Committee

H.O.P.E.

H.O.P.E. would like to thank those that have donated this past month:

John and Lois Kasarauskas

Heather Sibley

John and Charlotte Sroka

George and Janet Braen

Felicia Urbanski

This month we will be donating to CT Foodshare to help with federal funding cuts to its many programs, including the mobile food pantry which services Hamden.

If you would like to make a donation, you can do so by visiting our website or send a check to Dunbar UCC with HOPE in the memo.

Please help us keep up Helping Other People Eat.

Thank you,
Debbie Laffin

Trustees

The Trustees met on March 16. We reviewed financial reports, with expenditures and income within budgeted parameters.

We discussed the start of the paving project outside the kitchen.

Hamden paving has cleared and graded the lot and marked parking spots. We're encouraged to park on the lot to help pack the surface down. Asphalt will be laid on Easter Monday.

We have initiated discussions with the Hamden Land Trust concerning the acquisition of our property on Benham St. The organization is interested, but funding is a challenge. Conversations are ongoing.

We also discussed exploring updating the church website. Kathy Straka will explore the cost of a potential redesign, functionality and features for discussion at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
John Donohue

Deacons

The deacons have been preparing for Easter. We welcome our wonderful church community to participate in these upcoming Holy week and Easter services.

Palm Sunday April 13th

Palms will be distributed after service on Palm Sunday in front of the church so people not in personal attendance can come by and get them. Additional palms will be delivered to the house-bound.

Please let Kitty Donohue know if you would like palms delivered to your home. 203-887-9717

Holy Week

Tenebrae - Thursday, April 17th at 7pm. We will be conduct the service in person at church and no Zoom access is planned. Please join us in this important service.

Good Friday Vigil Friday, April 18th

The church will be open from 12 to 3 pm.

There will be a deacon present during the vigil. Please join us in prayer.

Easter Sunday, April 20th

Sunrise Service will be at 6 am outside on the church lawn

10am Easter Service inside (with Zoom access)

The Deacons continue to work to support members of the congregation in need. Please don't hesitate to reach out, we are here to help.

Respectfully yours,

Kitty Donohue

Easter Sunday Sunrise Breakfast is BACK!

Sunrise is 6:04 a.m., the service starts shortly before on the side of the church. A free breakfast (including John K's famous pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, and more) is served in Fellowship Hall after a beautiful outdoor service by Reverend George.

Come start your Easter celebration early with us!

Christian Education

The children of Dunbar have chosen three projects for Lent. They thought of ways they can be helpful and kind. We have planted tomato and marigold seeds, we are baking chocolate cookies to share at coffee hour, and they will make squirrels' food to feed the squirrels in their yards.

Janet Manukas

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.

You can donate online by scanning this QR code.

Donations are accepted through a secure site by Vanco.



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.”