



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.

December 2025

Pastor's Report, December 2025

The first Sunday of Advent is November 30 and the season lasts until Christmas Eve, which our church will celebrate this year at 5:00 pm with the largest Christmas Choir our church has assembled in years. "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus* which means "coming" or "arrival."

Traditionally, people prepare for the arrival of the baby Jesus, but also for Christ's expected return in the Second Coming. In church we light a candle each week for either hope, peace, joy or love, which are the gifts Jesus offers to us.

Last night in Bible Study Jesus was crucified a second time in the same year. It's like there are two Acts on the Christian Calendar, Act 1 and Act 2. At the conclusion of each act, humankind kills God. We call the first execution Easter, and the second, Advent. The second killing is also called Christ the King Sunday. Why? Is it because Jesus is going to his "kingdom" which he said is not of this world? I was at a Catholic funeral a few days ago and in his eulogy the priest often mentioned this "kingdom" — this other place we go, maybe, after we die. The priest quoted the gospel of John where Jesus said in his father's house are many rooms and Jesus will prepare a room for us when we die. Hopefully. In the eulogy the priest said that if the woman who died did not live a good enough life, then our prayers would give her the push she needed to enter heaven.

I talked with some Catholics recently who attend church every week. One said, "I only go to church because my mother said I'd go to hell if I didn't. That really scares me so I will keep going to church because I don't want to go to hell." I asked her what she thought about while she sat through the service. She said, "Things like my grocery list or what I'm cooking for dinner, or what's on TV tonight. Things like that."

In another conversation, with Janet, we talked about some people we know who have been holding grudges for each other for years. But each goes to church. I asked Janet why they hold grudges like that when one of the most important teachings of Jesus is forgiveness and how we need to settle disputes with each other “before the sun sets.” Janet, who was raised Catholic, said, “They don’t talk about Jesus’ teachings in the Catholic Church. They talk about Mary and the Apostle’s Creed and things you need to believe, not about change or transformation. People think they can stay the same and as long as they believe the right things, they’ll go to heaven when they die.

I started studying the Bible around 1978 when I was a student at Pepperdine University. I was amazed at what was in there. A lot of people believe the Bible is the inerrant word of God. I don’t. But much of the Bible clearly is the word of God. Like verse 34 from the 19th chapter of Leviticus, one of the most beautiful passages in the Bible. It says: “ Any immigrant who lives with you must be treated as if they were one of your citizens. You must love them as yourself, because you were immigrants.” If anyone reads this verse, Leviticus 19:34, and does not hear God, they are deaf. Another verse in the Bible that is clearly God speaking is when Jesus gave his one command: “Love one another as I have loved you.” Notice — both these commands to love are — commands — not choices. We are commanded to love immigrants as if they were citizens. We are told loving the immigrant is the same as loving ourselves — the same as loving Jesus (Matthew chapter 25).

But many Christians who say the Bible is the inerrant word of God don’t have a problem with how cruel and inhumanly we treat our foreign neighbors who are trying to make a life for themselves in the United States.

Someone in Bible Study last Wednesday evening mentioned the 25th chapter of Matthew’s gospel. I said, “I’m so frustrated with

that chapter. We should tear that out of our Bibles.” Because in Matthew 25 Jesus says whatever we do to “the least of these,” we do to him. So how can we in the U.S. say we “believe in” Jesus when we arrest and deport between one and three thousand people every day! In the past seven to ten months the estimate of people arrested and put in holding places or deported is about 350,000. The goal of the current administration is a million a year. How can we believe the Bible is the word of God and arrest Jesus hundreds of thousands of times and throw him in holding cells and reject him from our country? Why do Christians vote people into office who treat Jesus like this?

I don't think these questions have answers. Maybe we are the question, and advent is an answer. Traditionally it has been a time of preparation. We prepare ourselves to receive Christ. Because he is a healer, and our hearts and minds and souls need healing desperately. He will make us whole — like himself. And that may or may not change the world. And it may or may not fix our country or ease the suffering of the foreign-born who we treat so miserably. But I believe it will. The miracle of advent must begin right here.

Yours, with love, preparing a
place for Jesus,
George

*Contact Pastor George @
Phone: (203) 287-8106 or
revonweb@sbcglobal.net*



H.O.P.E.

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

Steve & Sandy Hurd

George & Janet Braen

Bob & Karen Corona

Heather Sibley

Charlotte & John Sroka

John & Lois Kasarauskas

This month we will be donating to the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK) and Loaves & Fishes to help these two great organizations handle the many holiday food needs this month. If you would like to make a donation, you can do so by visiting our website or sending a check to Dunbar with Hope in the memo.

Thank you for your support of Helping Other People Eat.

Debbie Laffin

Advent Workshop Dec. 14 after church (snow date Dec. 21)

Christmas Eve Service Dec. 24 5pm

Christian Education

We're excited to host our annual Advent Workshop on Sunday, December 14th. Join us for crafting and a pizza lunch. If you are willing to host a craft table please let me know.

Janet Manukas

Board of Missions and Concerns

Hi Everyone,

Missions continues to help organizations that we have donated to in the past and new ones during the holiday season .

- 1) Boxes to Boots (which are items they list and are sent to our soldiers).
- 2) The Keefe Center (for food needed for their Thanksgiving bags).
- 3) The Church on the Rock (Which Debbie told me they needed toiletries and cleansers)
- 4) Heifer International (they have a booklet which you can choose chicks , honey bees, garden seeds, animals etc.).
- 5) Closer to Free (for cancer research).

During the Advent Workshop on December 15th there will be a cookie walk to benefit The Tumor Foundation. There will be a \$5.00 donation. We will need all the great Dunbar members to bake their favorite cookie.

Thanks for all your continued support,
Donna and the Missions Committee

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.

Deacons

The Deacons are getting our church ready for the Advent season starting Sunday, November 30. Christmas falls on a Thursday this year.

Our choir has been practicing beautiful songs to celebrate Christ's birth.

The Deacons continue to support congregation members in need. Please feel free to contact us; we are here to assist.

Respectfully submitted,
Kitty Donohue

Trustees

The Trustees met in October to review finances, with both income and expenditures within budgeted range.

We have received a cost estimate for work to be done on the Parish House roof and front entrance, which will be reviewed at the Nov 23rd Trustees meeting.

We worked with Deb Laffin to secure pest control services for mice in the building. We will build monthly control costs into the 2026 budget.

We are also working to address the Town of Hamden's decision to revoke the tax exemption for the wooded lot we own on Benham Street, which the town says we are not using and should be put on the tax rolls. Rev. George is slated to speak with an official for the town on this issue and we also have our state representative's contact info to engage in additional troubleshooting. We have the option to contest the decision this coming February and will certainly do so.

Respectfully submitted,
John Donohue

Stewardship Committee Report

The Pledge Drive for next year's church budget continues this month. We're a little behind on our pledges compared to last year so please get your pledge information to me at your earliest convenience. Pledge cards are available in the narthex, you can download one from the DUCC website, or see me before or after service. If you want to just e-mail me your pledge information, that's okay too. Your pledge information is needed by the Budget Committee to come up with a draft budget, which is presented to the Trustees later this month and finalized prior to the annual meeting in January. We'll all vote on the budget at the Annual Meeting.

Pledge Drive FAQ:

Q - Why should I fill out a pledge card?

A - By completing and returning your pledge card, the amount you pledge will be included in the budget. The budget enables us to plan for the coming year.

Q - How much should I pledge?

A - Pledge what you are comfortable giving. If your financial situation happens to change during the year, you can adjust your pledge amount by just letting me or the church's treasurer know. So if you win Powerball and want to give more, fantastic. And if an unexpected expense comes up and you need to reduce your pledge, that's okay too.

Q - Can I pledge on-line?

A – Yes. There is a link on the church webpage www.dunbarchurch.com for making donations including your pledge. But please fill out a pledge card even if you give online.

Q - How can I get a box of offertory envelopes?

A – Anyone who fills out a pledge card will receive a box of envelopes. If you'd rather not get the envelopes, just note that on your pledge card.

Tom Parlapiano, Chairman
Stewardship Committee
twparlapiano@aol.com

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.”