



Under the Dome

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

Phone : (203) 288-2342

Email: office.dunbar@gmail.com

www.dunbarchurch.com

An Open & Affirming Congregation

Weekly Services

Sunday Mornings @ 10:00 A.M.

Saturday Evenings @ 5:00 P.M.

January 2026

Pastor's Report, January 2026

Last Wednesday night we had our Dunbar UCC Christmas Eve Service. Each year we read the same six lessons which announce the birth of Jesus from different Old and New Testament passages. They say things like “Clear the Lord’s way in the desert!” And “On those living in darkness, light has dawned.” The angel Gabriel tells Mary she will give birth to “the Son of the Most High” and he will rule and there will be no end to his kingdom. Mary says “Yes. Amen. Do it.” And after all this and prophecies of greatness and light and power and a never-ending kingdom — another reading says Mary Joseph couldn’t find a place that had room for them to give birth to Jesus so Mary delivered her child — God was born — in a barn. No one could have imagined that the almighty creator of the universe would come to us like this. Even the Bible doesn’t prepare us for it. Everyone’s looking and waiting for a king, the Messiah, the savior, to arrive. And when he does, no one has a clue. God comes to us under the radar.

Yesterday, Christmas Day, I had an experience something like that. Early in the morning as I got dressed I couldn’t find my favorite sweatshirt with the full zipper in front and the warm sherpa fleece lining. Finding it became an obsession because I’d worn it the day before. It’s like losing your keys or cell phone and you look everywhere — then look everywhere again and again. As if it might appear the second or third time. I went to the church around midnight on Christmas Eve still looking for it — maybe, I thought, I left it there. It was nowhere. Christmas morning I asked Janet if she’d seen it. She said no, and started looking around — the same places I’d already checked. I said, “Maybe it’s at your mother’s house — we were there recently.” She called her mother — but it wasn’t there either. It wasn’t in my car. Finally I gave it up for lost and went right to my computer

and to the Old Navy site and ordered two of them, resolving to be more careful this time.

Later that morning Maria and Zack arrived and with Annie and Janet we followed our tradition and sat and had our Christmas breakfast. Finally it was time to open presents. The last year or so I'm the one who passes out the presents, one at a time. It was my turn to open a present and I picked one with my name on it and opened it and it was my Old Navy sherpa-lined favorite sweatshirt still covered with dog and cat hairs and looking as it did when I last wore it before Janet pilfered it from me when I wasn't looking and wrapped it and stuck it under the tree. I opened it happy and relieved to see it — my favorite sweatshirt — and then called Janet all these names I can't write here. Good one Janet. She keeps telling people I was angry — but I wasn't. But she better not do that again.

But now as I think about all this, I think this was a conspiracy that was hatched by the angel Gabriel working with Janet, the two of them pranking me. To teach me a lesson, really — a Christmas lesson. “Look,” says Jesus to me, “look at all the times you passed your sweatshirt — while you were even looking at it! You walked by it within inches over and over — it was right under your nose, next to you — only hidden by the thinnest piece of paper — AND YOU DIDN'T SEE!” Alright. I'm beginning to see. I think we all do this every day -- God is right in front of us — in everyone we encounter, people, faces, undocumented children-of- God, strangers, trees, grass, our pets and other animals, the sky, the snow, the sun and moon. God everywhere, in everyone, in everything — and we walk by, not seeing the almighty, right under our noses, right next to us, IN US. God pranks us. My prayer for 2026 is, “OK God, good one. Good one, Jesus. You prank us, and we are pranked. Your disguises are working — we're clueless that the person we just talked to, we

just saw, we just thought about — IS YOU. Help us now, this year, even a little more — to see you. And let us become you, your love, even a little more, this year. Thank you!”

With love, much love to each
of you,

George

Contact Pastor George @

Phone: (203) 287 -8106 or

revonweb@sbcglobal.net

Souperbowl Luncheon February 8th

Save the Date for our "Famous" Souperbowl Luncheon on February 8! Directly after our church service upstairs, we will be serving our "famous" soups in Fellowship Hall! Salads will be out at 10:45 with soups served at 11:00. We will also be voting on the proceeds from our successful Apple Festival. Please let me know if you have a charity in mind you would like us to consider.

A suggested donation of \$5 for all the soup, salad and bread you can eat! Beverages and desserts included!

The Souperbowl Luncheon is open to EVERYONE, please invite your family and friends to join us! The more tummies we make warm, the better!

If anyone would like to make a soup, bread or dessert, please let me know so we can coordinate. Last year we had nine delicious soups! We will also package up left over soup into 32oz containers for only \$2 each!

Hope to see all your faces!

Much appreciated,
Debbie Laffin

H.O.P.E.

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

Bob and Karen Corona

George and Janet Braen

Charlotte and John Sroka

Heather Sibley

This month we will be donating to Brian's Angels Homeless Outreach which provides daily snack bags, hot meals and non-perishable food items to the homeless. Brian's Angels also provides clean clothing, toiletries, a safe space to shower and laundry facilities.

We will also be donating to Hopeville Church Food Pantry to help supply their weekend food bags to food-insecure elementary students in the area.

Bags are packed and distributed every Friday by volunteers.

We are also donating to World Central Kitchen which is currently providing meals in San Bernadino County, CA after historic rains and mudslides. They are especially reaching out to the mountain communities of Wrightwood and Lytle Creek with hot meals.

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 supporting Helping Other People Eat,
Debbie Laffin

Women's Fellowship future dates:

St. Patrick's Day Cafe Church on March 15

Easter Sunrise Breakfast on Easter Sunday, April 5.

Trustees

The Trustees continue to meet monthly 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, and are waiting for a start date.

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.

George and I met with representatives from the Town of Hamden and they agreed that they will reinstate the tax exemption for the wooded lot we own on Benham Street. We are in ongoing discussions with the Hamden Land Trust on the property and hope to have some further information in 2026.

The Trustees are meeting on December 28th to outline projects for the 2026 budget year.

Respectfully submitted,
John Donohue

Christian Education

The snow delayed us a week, but Advent Workshop was a great success. BIG thanks to Debbie, Kathy, George, John, Donna, Bella, Jennie, Lois, Charlotte, Gary, Linda, Kathleen, Annie, Mary, Luke, Ethan, and Nancy for making our Advent Workshop a day of fun, friendship and good food.

We hope it brightened the season for many.

Janet Manukas

Deacons

Greetings from your UCC Deacons,

December was a busy month for our church community as we prepared for Christmas. Our choir practiced diligently for the Christmas Eve service. We thank Joy Donaldson for her guidance and patience in delivering beautiful, inspiring music. The Deacons are committed to supporting congregation members in need.

Please feel free to reach out — we are here to help.

Respectfully submitted,
Kitty Donohue



Board of Missions and Concerns

Hi Everyone, to finish out the year Missions donated to

- 1) Foodshare
- 2) Toys and the fuel bank for the Keefe Center
- 3) UNICEF
- 4) UNHCR
- 5) North Haven food bank
- 6) Missions matched the donations from the cookie walk for the Children's Tumor Foundation in honor of Ethan Bonadies. Thanks to all that baked and helped to make it such a success.

Take care and wishing everyone a happy and healthy New Year,
Donna and the Missions Committee

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will be hosting Cafe Church for our Annual Meeting on January 18 (Snow date January 25) in Fellowship Hall so all will be comfortable transitioning directly into the annual meeting. Starting with breakfast bites will change into hearty food to get you through this easy, short, but meaningful annual meeting.

We need a quorum!

If anyone would like to make a sweet or savory item, it would be so welcome! Please let me know if you can help with set up or clean up. Many hands make light work!

We're looking forward to seeing everyone!

Thanks,
Debbie

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.

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.”