



Under the Dome

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

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An Open & Affirming Congregation

Weekly Services

Sunday Mornings @ 10:00 A.M.

Saturday Evenings @ 5:00 P.M.

May 2025

Pastor's Report, May 2025

Before Covid, March 2020, I went on one or two Centering Prayer retreats a year. Often in Frenchville, Pennsylvania, a six hour drive from Hamden. Does that pandemic seem like five years ago? Remember when we were advised to take regular vaccinations? — the two choices being Moderna or Pfizer? We carried our cards with us and sometimes places carded us to make sure we were current on our shots. And mask-wearing was required. It became political so if you were Republican or MAGA, you might resist the mask and mandatory vaccination requirements, saying it was an infringement on freedom. If you were Democrat, you were more likely to wear the mask and get the shots. Early in the pandemic, people were discouraged from going out at all, discouraged from any interactions. Now, five years later, Covid doesn't seem like a big deal. Though, I still get vaccinated for that and the flu and RSV. I think I've drifted — I was talking about my yearly retreats before Covid.

Last November or December, one of the members of my Centering Prayer group (we meet once a month at Sacred Heart High School) told me of a retreat planned for May that would be led by Fr. Bill Sheehan. After Covid, I'd gotten into the habit of NOT going on retreats — but the second Kathy told me about this one in May, I called up Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center in West Hartford and reserved a spot. It was before Christmas — and at the time May seemed so far away. But here we are! Easter 2025 is history already. And in about a week I'll go to this huge, old brick building — l o n g, and four stories tall. Once there, I won't talk to anyone for six days, even at meals, and will sit with Fr. Bill and the group for four hours a day. All tech stuff is discouraged — phones, laptops, music — even book reading. When we're not doing centering prayer or eating, we can walk around the grounds or nap. I'll still bring books and a guitar and probably my phone. Just to have them there — in case I panic from too much inactivity and have to DO something.

But why do this at all? In his letter to the Philippians, Paul says: "Therefore, my beloved, ... work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to

will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling and arguing.” (Philippians 2:12-13)

I think we’re all doing this — working on our own salvation with fear and trembling. Because, spiritually, we have to find our own way in this life. We can find guides — but even those, we have to choose. Some guides show us a way to heaven and goodness, and love of neighbor, forgiveness, joy and peace. And some guides will show us the way to hell, revenge, suspicion and paranoia and hatred of our neighbor. We pick our guides — at our risk. In this letter to the Philippians, Paul mentioned “guides” whom he calls “dogs...evil workers...enemies of the Cross of Christ.” And people followed them. And some followed Paul.

From about twenty years ago, Fr. Bill has been an important guide in my life. He’s a priest, almost 90 now, and has been a spiritual guide and centering prayer retreat leader for most of his life. I knew after my first hour in his company that he was “the real deal.” I think no matter who we are, or how long we’ve been doing this — walking a spiritual path — we need to check in with someone we trust who has been on this path a longer time, who has acquired wisdom along the way, who can point us in the right direction and even offer some encouragement to keep at it, keep knocking at God’s door like the persistent widow of Jesus’ parable. When I heard my centering prayer friend Kathy tell me about this retreat with Fr. Bill, I felt like it was God using Kathy to give me a gentle shake and say, “Go! You need to do this. It’s time.”

In my 24 hours of centering, I’ll see each of you, I’m sure, in my mind’s eye, grateful we are traveling this most wonderful path together.

Love, in the time of Post-Covid, Post-Easter,

George

Contact Pastor George @

Phone: (203) 287 -8106 or

revonweb@sbcglobal.net

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship would like to thank all that helped with a very successful Annual Tag Sale on April 5! We brought back our Sunrise Service Breakfast on Easter morning thanks to the many cooks and helpers! John Kasarauskas' pancakes were the biggest hit!

Women's Fellowship will be hosting a Spring Cafe Church on Sunday, May 18.

Food will be ready by 9:45 with the service starting at 10 a.m.

As usual, you never know what you'll be served at our Cafe Church, but there will always be plenty! Please let me know if you can help set up, cook, bake, chop or clean up.

Debbie

203 281-3241



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

H.O.P.E.

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

George and Janet Braen

Bob and Karen Corona

Heather Sibley

John and Charlotte Sroka

This month we will be donating to Loaves & Fishes for food supplies. Loaves & Fishes shares God's love by providing food, clothing and community to our neighbors in a safe and welcoming space.

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.

Thank you,
Debbie Laffin

Christian Education

Many thanks to the many hands that helped to fill the Easter eggs, "hide" them, and gather them back up again. Thank you to Elizabeth, Charlotte, Lois, Annie, and the kids of all ages who hunted and then carefully returned the eggs to the basket.

The tomato plants that the kids started from seed in March continue to grow in the Parish House and we hope to pass them out in mid-May.

Our Sunday School lessons will continue each Sunday until June 8th. After that we'll take a break for the summer and resume after Labor Day.

Janet Manukas

Deacons

Spring greetings!

We're seeking additional choir members to join our vital musical ministry. Our choir meets every Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the church.

I want to express my gratitude to all our deacons and church members who participated in our Tenebrae Service. It was truly a touching and moving experience.

The deacons remain dedicated to supporting members of the congregation in need. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you require assistance.

Respectfully yours,
Kitty Donohue

Trustees

The Trustees met on April 13.

- We reviewed and approved the Treasurer's Report for March.
- The paving project on the lower level is almost completed. Parking space striping and few minor details will be completed the week of April 21st.
- Discussion with the Hamden Land Trust is ongoing.
- Kathy Straka is working to get cost estimates for an update of the church website and ongoing maintenance.

Respectfully submitted,
John Donohue

Board of Missions and Concerns

Hi Everyone,

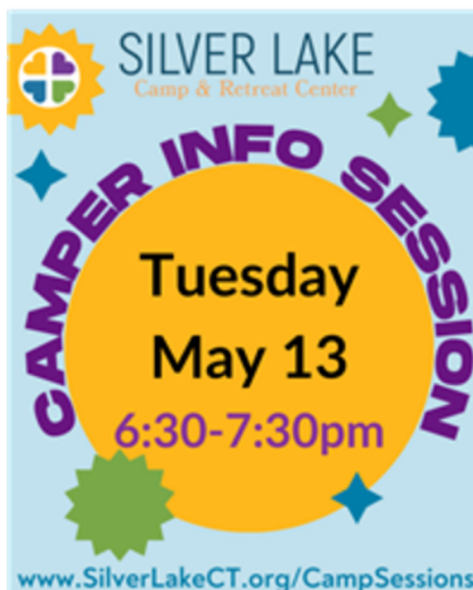
Missions will be making donations to DAV (Disabled American Veterans), Habitat for Humanity (Sleeping Giant Build), Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and Autism Awareness.

We will continue to help organizations where there is a need.

Take care,

Donna and the Missions Committee

Easter Sunrise Service



Summer Camp Information Session

Join us for an informational Zoom where we dive into what summer camp at Silver Lake looks like.

We'll go over general information, what a typical week looks like, and answer any questions you may have.

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.”