



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.

November 2025

Pastor's Report, November 2025

When I was in High School we had to read “Lord Of The Flies” by William Golding. Golding taught English and Philosophy at a boy's school in England for five years, then enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1940 and stayed there for the next six years. He participated in the D Day invasion, and also in the Naval battle where the German ship, the Bismarck, was sunk. Of his World War II experiences, Golding said, “I began to see what people were capable of doing. Anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head.” Golding's teaching experience, and his participation in the war, gave him insights into human nature, especially concerning the struggle within us between good and evil.

In 1954, after 21 rejections, Golding published Lord of the Flies. It was a story of a group of pre-adolescent boys stranded on a deserted island after a plane wreck. Lord of the Flies explored the savage side of human nature as the boys, freed from the constraints of society, brutally turned against one another. Today this book is considered a classic. Even though, today, it is banned in many schools. Why? It's not as violent or sexually explicit or disparaging of human beings as the Bible. I'm amazed how books like Lord Of The Flies, Huckleberry Finn, To Kill A Mockingbird and Harry Potter are banned, and the Bible isn't. The Bible has a much more severe and terrible view of people. And the Bible is filled with more sex and idolatry than Housewives of Beverly Hills, and more violence than The Terminator. Why won't good Christians ban the Bible?

Anyway, I'm getting off track. The reason I'm thinking about Lord Of The Flies after all these years is because I'm having a Deja Vu moment. Living in the United States of America now in the year 2025, I feel like I'm living on that tropical island with those young boys as they turned from civilized prep-school students into

murderous, bloody savages. I feel that we, our country, is becoming the nightmare that Golding envisioned — Lord of the Flies. Like the novel, we have divided ourselves into tribes that are hostile toward each other. Everything has become a fight for power and control. And religion has failed. As I've noted previously, the word "religion" is derived from the Latin verb "religare" meaning "to bind back," or "to reconnect." Our faith is supposed to reconnect us to one another, not divide us. But despite our "faith", our divisions grow, and the cracks that separate us deepen. What happened to our faith?

This is how Lincoln ended his Second Inaugural Address (Saturday, March 4, 1865 — he was killed a little over a month later, on April 14):

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

This is how a leader speaks and governs. A real leader speaks of charity (love) for all, healing divisions, caring for the sick, the injured, the poor and weak. Real leaders do not call people names, or seek revenge or use their power to bully and intimidate people who don't agree with them.

Ironically, the failure of religion is the theme that runs through the whole Bible. It's crazy, isn't it. The enemy of the prophets were the established leaders of Israel's religious institutions, the priests and high priests of Judaism. Jesus' enemies were the religious people, as his enemies are today — my colleagues, my religious family. Because we (enough of us) gave the power to the people who are writing our story now: Lord of the Flies, Part 2.

After her brother Lazarus died, Martha told Jesus, “And even now it’s not too late, for I know that God will bring my brother back to life again, if you will only ask him to.” And this is our prayer too, this is our hope now — “It is not too late, Jesus — I have faith that God will bring us back to life again, if you will only ask him to — if we will only ask him to.”

It’s still the good news, and all will be well, and all will be well, and all manner of things will be well,

George

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Women’s Fellowship

APPLE FESTIVAL WAS A SUCCESS! Sending gigantic thanks to everyone who helped make the 56th Apple Festival another success!! It opened with a crowd, but to many of us, it didn't seem quite so busy during the day. However, thanks to Joe and Steve counting, the numbers actually improved quite a bit from last year! We will be able to donate to the many charities as usual and more! If you have any charity you would like Women's Fellowship to consider, please let me or Kathy Straka know. We will be voting on distributions at our Annual Souper Bowl Sunday, February 8, 2026.

P.S. Pie making starts on September 9, 2026 with the 57th Apple Festival on October 17, 2026! Mark your calendars!

Women's Fellowship will sponsor the New Haven Association Annual Meeting on Wednesday, November 5 at 6p.m. at Dunbar and our Friendsgiving Brunch on November 9. Women's Fellowship will also help sponsor our Advent Workshop on December 14.

Debbie

H.O.P.E.

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

Bob and Karen Corona

Heather Sibley

George and Janet Braen

Charlotte and John Sroka

John and Lois Kasarauskas

This month we will be donating to CT Foodshare to help with an increase in need due to the government shutdown. We hope this will help with the uncertainty of food insecurity for some furloughed and lay-off workers in our state. CT Foodshare is part of the Feed America family.

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

FRIENDSGIVING BRUNCH IS HAPPENING SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9!!

All are invited to join us for a Friendsgiving Brunch to be held immediately after church service in Fellowship Hall Sunday, November 9! Some traditional Thanksgiving foods will be served as well as some surprises as usual! If you would like to bring something special to add to the menu, that would be terrific! Items like a special casserole, a veggie dish, a baked good, an appetizer, or a dessert would be fun to try! (You do not need to bring anything to attend.)

Please invite anyone you would like to join us in this Friendsgiving Day! All are so welcome! Hope to see all of you at this fun brunch!

Board of Missions and Concerns

Hi Everyone,

Missions has donated to the Special Olympics, CT , LeSea Global Feed The Hungry (which will help feed the people in Ukraine), and Freetown-New Haven Sister Cities (this will help with shipping preschool items to Sierra Leone).

We continue to help organizations in need.

Take care,

Donna and the Missions Committee

Trustees

The Trustees continue to meet and monitor both income and expenses. To date, both categories are within budget and expectations.

Kathy Straka continues to work on the project for updating the church website.

John Donohue is working with Peter Bonadies to secure a quote for initial work on the Parish House, with the expectation that a new roof will be installed soon.

Steve Hurd is making arrangements to transfer the funds so generously bequeathed to the church by Ginny Granquist into an interest bearing account, with the money be available for use for the Parish Hall, as well as music.

The next Trustee meeting will be on October 26.

Respectfully submitted,

John Donohue

Deacons

Greetings from your UCC Deacons,

October was a busy month for our church community as we prepared for our annual Apple Fest. It's inspiring to see everyone come together and work diligently to ensure its success each year.

The Deacons are dedicated to supporting congregation members in need. Please feel free to reach out — we are here to help.

Respectfully submitted,
Kitty Donohue

Christian Education

Save the date! Sunday, December 14th will be our annual Advent Workshop immediately following church. We're looking folks to offer crafts and we need all of you to come create, eat and enjoy the spirit of the season.

Women's Fellowship will provide a pizza lunch. Yum.

Janet Manukas

Stewardship Committee Report

Just a reminder that our annual pledge drive will begin this month. Our pledges - how much we plan to give to the church through our offerings in the coming year - are used to formulate a budget which includes salaries, supplies, utilities, insurance, outreach and improvements.

Look for a pledge letter and pledge card coming soon.

Sincerely,
Tom Parlapiano, Chair

Beloved in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in this holy season. Each October, the wider church recognizes Clergy Appreciation Month, a time to pause and celebrate the faithful leaders who guide our communities with prayer, preaching, presence, and care.

The apostle Paul writes, “Now we ask you, [siblings], to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other” (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13, NIV). This reminder calls us not only to gratitude but also to practices that sustain those who shepherd us.

Our clergy carry profound responsibilities. They stand with us in moments of joy and in seasons of grief, offering words of hope and gestures of grace. This month offers us a holy invitation to acknowledge their ministry and to encourage practices that keep them renewed.

To the Members and Friends of Our Churches:

The greatest gift you can offer your clergy is not material, but space and support for their rest and renewal. Here are a few ways you might celebrate them this month:

- Honor Sabbath: Support clergy in taking a full day of rest and protect it by minimizing calls, texts, or last-minute requests.
- Encourage Renewal: Create space for clergy to attend retreats, continuing education, or spiritual direction without guilt or hesitation.
- Share Leadership: Step in to lead a meeting, read scripture, or organize fellowship so that clergy aren’t carrying every detail.
- Lift Them in Prayer: Dedicate time in worship or meetings to pray for their strength, wisdom, and well-being.
- Speak Gratitude Aloud: Offer a word of thanks publicly in worship or privately in conversation. Hearing appreciation matters.
- Respect Boundaries: Recognize clergy as whole people with families and lives beyond church and give them permission to step away.
- Celebrate Their Calling: Mark milestones, an ordination anniversary, years of service, or personal achievements with joy and acknowledgment.

To the Clergy of SNEUCC:

Dear colleagues, may this month remind you that you are worthy of Sabbath. You are not called to serve endlessly without pause. Rest is not a luxury but a holy commandment. Allow yourself to receive the encouragement of your congregations and the grace of God’s reminder: Come away and rest awhile (Mark 6:31).

A Closing Word

As a Conference, let us practice appreciation by creating a culture where clergy can flourish, not only this October but in every season. When clergy are renewed, our churches are strengthened, and the Gospel is proclaimed with joy.

A Prayer of Blessing:

Holy One,

We give thanks for the clergy who guide, comfort, and inspire us.

Grant them rest for their bodies, renewal for their spirits, and joy for their journey of service.

Bless our congregations with wisdom to support their leaders well, that together we may continue to proclaim Your love with boldness and grace.

Amen.

Rev. Darrell Goodwin
Executive Conference Minister and President

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.”