



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.

Summer 2025

Pastor's Report, Summer 2025

Ernest Hemingway said when you've got writer's block or don't know what to write, just write one true sentence. And the rest will follow. So I'm looking for that now, my one true sentence to give you this third Friday of July, 2025. It's the middle of summer. Children have been out of school about a month, and in a month they will be returning. Annie will be moving off to her first year as a student at Sacred Heart University. Yesterday on her second attempt at her drivers license — the driving part of the test — she passed. I was excited, and surprised, to hear that. I expected her to pass on the third or fourth attempt. Already she's claiming her mother's car as her own. She's going to put one of those car air fresheners in it. I said "Oh please don't do that. Those make me sick." I said "the welcoming prayer" to myself: "Welcome, welcome. I let go of my desire for security, affection, and control — like controlling what Annie puts in her mother's car even if it makes me sick — and I embrace this moment completely." Annie didn't know I said that to myself. I think to reassure me she scratched a part of the wrapper it comes in and stuck it under my nose and said, "Here — smell it. It's nice right? Not too strong." It was something with coconut. I said, "Yeah — not bad...." And again said to myself, "Welcome, welcome — I let go of my desire for security....etc...."

Maybe that's the theme here. It's been a summer of welcoming prayers for me, a lot of practice letting go of desires for security, affection, control and just accepting whatever God — whatever the day — brings. Heat waves, humidity in air so heavy it feels like a swamp — but a lot of nice, summer stuff too. I kind-of became interested in the New York Yankees and record their games — there's one tonight. The games are still too long and slow and boring to watch — but if they're recorded, you can fast forward it on 2x or 3x speed and just slow it down when someone gets a hit or a home run. That way the game is over in 15 minutes. Janet's growing a vegetable garden and the zucchinis and yellow squash are doing well this year. She starts cooking every morning sometimes before 6:00. And Blue Trail, the band I play in has a gig tomorrow at Hindinger Farm and then another gig at Counter Weight in Hamden on 8/30. I think they brew their own beer. So that's always fun — to get together with the band and play songs.

Summer is like a Netflix series of episodes, every day a new story with Nat King Cole singing the opening soundtrack of each day, "Roll Out Those Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer...." Nat nailed the summer vibe, the memories, the experience of summer with that song. It's so fun, so carefree, so

innocent. It says, come on everybody — it's summertime now! Roll out those lazy, crazy days of soda and pretzels and beer. Go to the drive-in and kiss your sweetheart in the car. I went on Youtube because this was Nat's song and watching him sing it again with his straw hat and holding the ukulele brings it all back. But I get a little nervous for Nat because he's the only black person in the video. All the backup singers are white men and women and when he gets to the part about taking your sweetheart to the drive-in, he gives a look at one of the women singers passing by and I think, O Nat — be careful because you look at a white woman like that those good ol' boys might lynch you.

You know who else sang a lot about summer fun? The Beach Boys. I'm thinking of the song, "And she'll have fun, fun, fun, till her daddy takes the T-Bird away." Or, "Sittin' in my car outside your house; remember when you spilled Coke all over your blouse; T-shirts, cut-offs, and a pair of thongs; We've been having fun all summer long." Fun, fun, fun. Even after all these years — those are still some of the soundtracks of my summer. Or the instrumental Theme from Endless Summer by The Sandals. A movie about making summer last all year long - an endless summer - by following the season around the world. Keep summer going and surf every day. Keep chasing the perfect wave (they found it at Cape St. Francis in South Africa).

Ahhhh, summer. I wish it were so. I wish everybody would have happiness now, and happiness in the future. I want everybody to enjoy lazy, hazy, crazy days, and kisses in the drive-in, and fun, fun, fun all summer long. But this isn't a Disney movie. In our country, our United States, there are at least three thousand people A DAY who are being captured, arrested, zip-tied and sent to holding places — cages — where they will be detained until deported to the country of their origin or even another country they've never been to. Three thousand, every day — that is the quota now the U.S. Government has made for the number of people without "papers" — legal documentation — to be taken from their places of work, from schools, Home Depots, motels, homes, public transportation — any place — even churches. ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents, often with masks, will come and snatch a person up, all ages, all genders. Something like 600 American citizens have been mistakenly taken this way. The news networks have done a terrible job of reporting this spiritual and moral catastrophe that is happening right now all around us.

Where are the Pro-Life people now? They were so successful in protecting the lives of the unborn. But we need Pro-Life voices to protect these

already-born. They want life too — they were living here and now they're not. Abort. Deport. Both two syllables that end with o r t. Both about ending a life. One ends a life in the womb, the other ends a life in America.

I am not Amos, or Isaiah, or Jeremiah. But however minor, I am still a prophet, saying on God's behalf, that what we Americans are doing to the people of other countries who live here and are trying to make a life for themselves and their families — as our ancestors did — is a moral, spiritual catastrophe and we must stop. I don't know how. Things seem so set in motion. There is so much momentum now for inhumanity. How do you stop it? The angel Gabriel, and Isaiah, and Jesus said nothing is impossible with God. Let's see. And while we wait, let us pray, "Welcome, welcome. I let go of my desire for security, affection and control, and I embrace this moment completely."

As I embrace each of you, my dear spiritual companions,

George

Contact Pastor George @

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

Board of Missions and Concerns

Hi Everyone,

Missions is helping with the floods in Texas by donating to Team Rubicon. They are veterans that help people prepare, respond and recover from disaster and humanitarian crisis.

NAMI CT (National Alliance of Mental Illness) and Connecticut Food Share.

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

Take care,

Donna and the Missions Committee

Women's Fellowship

Apple Festival

It's not too early to think of our upcoming Apple Festival! Please donate your better than Goodwill items such as small appliances, kitchen utensils, pots and pans, dishes, glassware, knick knacks, books, toys, puzzles, tools, jewelry, weird stuff and more!

If you're feeling crafty, make something for the bazaar table! Test recipes out for something great for our bake sale! Donate new items for our raffle baskets! Jams and Jellies is always looking for new ideas! Think about how you would like to volunteer this year! We need everyone's participation to have another great Apple Festival!

Pie making starts September 10 at 9:30 a.m.

Apple Festival is Saturday, October 18, 9a.m. to 1 p.m.

Any questions, please call.

Debbie

203 281-3241

H.O.P.E.

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

George and Janet Braen

John and Lois Kasarauskas

Charlotte and John Sroka

Bob and Karen Corona

Heather Sibley

This month we are donating to Mercy Chefs. They were one of the first responding groups serving hot meals to first responders and those who lost their homes in the terrible flooding in Texas. Mercy Chefs are still there providing meals. Words just can't describe the terrible loss. Mercy Chefs is a faith based, non-profit disaster relief organization.

We are helping in the small way we can.

Again, thank you for donating!

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

Trustees

The Trustees meet and engaged in the following:

- Reviewed the budget reports from the Treasurer. To date income and expenses are within established parameters
- Discussed draft memo on discussions with the Hamden Land Trust and determined to refine the proposal with estimates on costs for the Parish House and propose a purchase for approximately 60% of the assessed land value for the parcel at 935 Benham St.
- Kathy Straka presented information on website updating and annual maintenance costs for UCC-affiliated web support company. Kathy will spearhead the effort to move forward.
- Kathy also discussed DUCC hosting the New Haven Association Annual Meeting on Wednesday November 5. Preparations are ongoing
- Tex Landscaping presented a proposal to redo the landscaping around the corner sign for the church. Members suggested using native plants and wondered if the proposed cost could be lowered. Discussions with Tex are ongoing.

The Trustees will continue to work on these and other issues over the summer but meetings will be placed on hiatus for July and August.

Respectfully submitted,
John Donohue



Deacons

Summer Greetings!

Dear Everyone,

We are excited to invite more members to join our wonderful choir! Your participation in this important musical ministry would be greatly appreciated. Our choir rehearsals will be held every Tuesday at 7 PM at the church, starting in September. We would love for you to be a part of it!

We are grateful to have Rev. Hiram Brett as our summer supply priest while Rev. George enjoys his vacation. His support has been invaluable during this time.

Additionally, our deacons remain committed to assisting members of the congregation in need. Please feel free to reach out if you or someone you know could use assistance.

Thank you for being such a caring community.

Warm regards,
Kitty Donohue

Women's Fellowship Scholarship

Each year Dunbar Women's Fellowship awards scholarships to adult members pursuing higher education or vocational training. Applications are taken in the Spring. We raise the money for the scholarships through our events including the Apple Festival in the Fall and the Spring Tag Sale.

This year's recipients are Annie Manukas, Eleanore Nowacki and Laura Elizabeth Whiskeyman.

We honor their educational aspirations, and their achievements. So good to read their applications.

Congratulations!
The Scholarship Committee

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.”