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Under the  
**Dome**

## Dunbar United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation  
767 Benham Street, Hamden, CT 06514



December, 2011

On the Sunday before Thanksgiving, we read from the prophet Ezekiel:

Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. (Ezekiel 34:20-22)

The Gospel reading that followed was from Matthew where “the Son of Man comes in all his glory” to separate the sheep from the goats.” And he will bless the sheep because, he says, “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” The “righteous” will say: “When did we see you and do all these good things?” And the king will answer: “...as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:31ff)

I imagine that the Son of Man, the king -- Jesus Christ risen from the dead -- is sad when he looks at us now, two thousand years after he walked this earth as a Jewish peasant. He would be sad to see that we worship the golden bull that is displayed on the altar of Wall Street. In our society of the golden bull, money is the most important thing -- more important than people. And that's more true today than at any other time in our history,

especially since the Supreme Court, in their recent Citizens United decision, made it legal for businesses, corporations, and the most wealthy to buy politicians, buy elections, buy the government. Everything is for sale in America: a pair of shoes, a congressman, a president. It used to be that one of our political parties favored the wealthy and businesses, and the other was more populist, more for the common person. But that distinction isn't so clear now as money plays more of a role in our nation's way of life. Money is everything in America -- more important than the health of its citizens, more important than the welfare of immigrants -- more important than God. Money is everything.

Ron Paul was asked at one of the presidential debates about health care. "What if a person is dying," he was asked, "and they have no medical insurance?" Ron Paul, who is a doctor, said it's unfortunate, but when the person decided not to have insurance, they took that risk. The moderator asked him, "Should we treat that person, even if they can't pay?" Someone from the audience yelled out -- before Paul could answer: "Let them die!" And I thought, Yes -- exactly. That's what we are now. We are the jungle now -- we live by the laws of the jungle -- survival of the fittest -- survival of those who can pay. Every person is on his or her own. If someone can't afford treatment, or living expenses, "Let them die!" I suggest we remove "In God We Trust" from our money -- because it's not true -- and replace those words with: "Let them die." Our new national motto. If someone can't pay -- let them die. If someone does not have the sacred coin, the sacred dollar, the measure of our worth, let them die.

So I'm discouraged by the sea of spiritual sickness about me and in me, the death of our nation's soul, and as I sink in the waters of selfishness that poison us I'm looking for something to grab onto -- something to keep me afloat -- to show that God hasn't abandoned us. Something to show that Christ **IS** still here. But where is my salvation? Where is he? Miraculously, I saw the sign I was looking for this morning. I saw Christ telling me that he hasn't abandoned me or my country. It was Jesus Christ in the face of an 84 year old woman who was pepper-sprayed by police in Seattle. There was Christ looking at me, at us, through her puffy, red, weeping, eighty-four year old eyes saying: "Don't worry -- I'm still here." The woman was Dorli Rainey. Another person, a young veteran from the Iraq war grabbed her as she was about to fall. She said she would have been trampled but this young man put his arm around her and held her up and said, "Don't worry. I've got you. You're going to be fine." Later, Dorli told her story to the news. She said she came to this country when Hitler was gaining power in Germany and, as a Jew, she knew she wasn't safe there. She said Joseph Goebbels was minister of propaganda so there was no real news reported, only what those in power wanted the people to believe. She said she sees that happening now in the United States as more of the news is controlled by the corporations who own

the media. It's harder, she said, to know what's really happening. At 84 years old, she marched in the "Occupy Seattle" rally to protest the alarming conditions in America where the division between the wealthy and the poor grows larger and larger.

Ezekiel told us, "...thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep." And there was God in Seattle, speaking through the wrinkled, withered old mouth of Dorli Rainey. There was Christ in the marchers in Seattle, hungry, thirsty, strangers to the banks of Wall Street, hand-cuffed and led to prison. So our hope is not lost. We can celebrate Christmas this year knowing that God is still "Emmanuel" -- still with us. He may even find us, and use our hands to heal a sick or injured person. God may use our bodies to hold and support and keep from being trampled an elderly person who's just been brutalized by the armies of the billionaires and the corporations. God may use our mouths to bring good news to the strangers, the unemployed, and the occupiers of the streets and cities and jails. In Bethlehem of Judea, in Wall Street of New York City, in Hamden of New Haven County, Christ is born.

yours, in love and solidarity with the pepper-sprayed Christ,

George

#### **Dunbar UCC Open and Affirming/Mission 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, 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.



**Please keep the following friends and family in your prayers...**

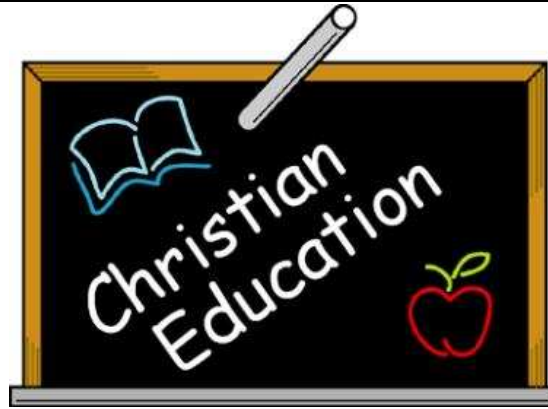
- Barbara Hamilton
- Pete Laffin
- Jean Copeland
- Jennifer Johnsons husband
- Jordan Jacques
- Felix Mazur
- George Forte



### **2012 Stewardship Pledge Drive**

As of November 17<sup>th</sup>, when I am submitting this report, the Commitment Committee has received roughly half of the pledge cards we mailed out to members at the end of October. This is a good start, but we still have a ways to go to reach our goal, which is a pledge card from ALL our members. To those who have already pledged, thank you so much for your generosity. The average pledge has increased and to date we have made a pretty good dent in the budget. To those who have not yet submitted a pledge card, please do your part to help this year's stewardship drive succeed by submitting your pledge card as soon as possible. The Trustees meet on December 14 to finalize the budget, so don't delay. If you lost your pledge card or did not receive one, they are available in the narthex. Just fill it out and place it in the collection basket. Pledge cards are available at coffee hour as well. If you have any questions about the pledge drive or pledge cards, please ask me. In short, pledges assist the Trustees in their efforts to craft a budget by eliminating much of the guess work. Please be as generous as you can so our church can continue its work, helping to take the load off those less fortunate, and spreading God's word in the community.

Tom Parlapiano, Chairman  
Commitment Committee



The snow on the weekend of October 30<sup>th</sup> kept many people home, but a few brave souls ventured forth to Dunbar Church and enjoyed Bible Character Sunday. We got to see each other's costumes, decorate some pumpkins and have some yummy treats. Coming up on December 11 is Advent Sunday Workshop! Many people have already volunteered to host a craft table but there is still time to sign up. The sign-up sheet is posted in the Narthex. The children will be putting on a Christmas play during church service. Pizza will be served for lunch.

Once again this year, CE will be hosting a cookie walk. Five dollars gets you a decorated coffee can that you can fill with cookies. Proceeds this year will go to the Fisher House Foundation (<http://www.fisherhouse.org>). The congregation is asked to bake cookies for the cookie walk or bring a dessert for our pizza lunch.

The board of Christian Education is looking for new members! If you are interested in joining the board of CE, please let Bruce Detmers know (Nominating Committee).

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Braen.



### **Trustees**

The work Trustees have been doing:

Painting the parish house, replacing chairs and tables in the church hall, and fixing appliances.

Also, Trustees are looking for new members for January. If you have any questions, please call me at 203 631 3471. Thanks, Lawrence Liseo



## Missions

A big thank you to all those that helped with our 38 boxes for Operation Christmas Child! Neighbors in Need total will be calculated after this dome report and will be announced next month. We are starting a project with Big Brothers/Big Sisters with a clothing drive. We will be collecting clothes (only clothes, sheets, blankets) for their fundraising efforts. Clothes can be dropped off in Fellowship Hall from December 4 to January 8. Hoping to send some cookies and goodies to Afghanistan for our troops. (Steve reported 18" of snow last week, so winter has already arrived) Also some needed winter supplies will be put into two boxes with shipping provided by Missions. The biggest need right now is boot socks, canned spaghetti, canned chili, (the unit has been moved and the food is not that great) candy, letters, cards, holiday wishes, pictures of CT. Hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and looking forward to a great Christmas!



After recovering from a great Apple Festival, Women's Fellowship met for a work meeting on November 9 and is planning a fun Potluck Christmas lunch on December 14 at noon. Please bring a small potluck dish and an under \$10 wrapped gift for our fun Yankee Swap. Everyone goes home with a gift and some fun fellowship and memories. Please mark on your calendars our soup and salad luncheon for January 11 at noon. Hopefully old man winter will be kinder to us this year! Women's Fellowship will be sponsoring a table at advent workshop on December 11 and the Fellowship is asked to bring finger friendly desserts. Happy Holiday to All!!



**Best wishes to all those celebrating birthdays & anniversaries in December!!**

6<sup>th</sup> ... Happy Birthday to Dale long!  
 11<sup>th</sup> ... Happy Birthday George Manukas!  
 28<sup>th</sup> ... Happy Birthday Geneene Luedee !  
 31<sup>st</sup> ... Happy Birthday AJ Luedee, turning 11!  
 Happy Birthday Pete and Deb Laffin!!!



Are you receiving our Weekly Newsletter via email?  
 If not, email Geneene and she will add you to our Weekly Newsletter List!!  
[ducc767@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ducc767@sbcglobal.net)



### **Childcare**

If your child is too young for Sunday School, we have Childcare offered to all families during our Sunday Worship!! Mary Allen and Linda Rua run the Childcare on the lower level of the Parish House. So drop off your little one's for fun and play while you enjoy the Sunday Service!!



### **Bible for Beginners**

Bible for Beginners is a bible study group that meets from the second Monday in September to the second Monday in June, from 7 to 8 p.m. in the Parish House. Moderated by Rev. George Manukas, Bible for Beginners discusses what the Bible has to teach about how we should live our everyday lives as we go through our routines of work, family life, relationships, and community involvement. Come when you can. Attendance at every class is not required, and there is no homework -- except the constant effort to put our insights of loving God and neighbor into practice. For more information about Bible for Beginners contact Rev. Manukas at 203-287-8106.



### **CHRISTMAS EVE MUSIC**

If anyone is interested in helping with music for the Christmas Eve Service, please see Nancy Braen after church or email [njbraen@comcast.net](mailto:njbraen@comcast.net).

## **Dunbar United Church of Christ**

**Pastor:** Rev. George Manukas • **Moderator:** Jim Arseniadis • **Treasurer:** Joe Braen  
**Assistant Treasurer:** Mark Rosa • **Clerk:** Sandra Kops • **Sexton:** Victor Mitchell  
**Secretary:** Geneene Luedee • **Hall Rentals:** Geneene Luedee • **Web Site:** Nancy Braen  
**Nominations:** Bruce Detmers • **Altar Flowers:** Betty Detmers • **Budget:** Steve Hurd

### **Deacons**

George Manukas (Pastor); Nicole Jacques (Chair); Heather Sibley (Chair); Jordan Jacques (2012);  
 Kathy Straka (2012); Betty Detmers (2012); Tom Palapiano (2012); Judy Campbell (2012); Mark  
 Rosa (2011)

### **Missions and Concerns**

Debbie Laffin (Chair); Nancy Braen (Co-Chair 2012); Donna Burkbuckler (Co-Chair 2012);  
 Olga Dryfoos (2012); Janet Braen (2014); Dale Long (2014); Sandy Hurd (2014)

### **Trustee's**

Gary Burkbuckler (2013); Bob Corona (2013); Ted Endriss (2013); Larry Liseo (Chair 2012);  
 Al Via (2012); Chuck Walters (2012); George Braen (2014); Paul Jacques (2014); Bruce Detmers  
 (2014);

### **Christian Education**

Nancy Braen (2012 Chair); Donna Burkbuckler (2012); Janet Lavorgna (2012); Cindy Long (2012);  
 Libby Wamser (2012); Bell Forte (2014); Janet Manukas (2014); Ellyn Liseo (2014); Taylor Jacques  
 (2014); Olga Dryfoos (2014)

### **Investment**

Bruce Detmers (Chair); Jim Arseniadis (Moderator); Joe Braen (Treasurer); Meg Nowacki; Tom  
 Parlapiano; Chuck Walters

### **Pastoral Relations**

Meg Nowacki (Chair); Jim Arseniadis; Judy Campbell; Steve Hurd; Betty Detmers  
 Columbarium  
 Bruce Detmers (Chair); Bob Corona; Betty Detmers; Ellyn Liseo; Barbara Walters; Chuck Walters;  
 Ann Watjen

### **Publicity**

Cindy Long; Tom Parlapiano

### **Memorial Gifts**

Ginny Granquist; Meg Nowacki

~ December 2011 ~  
**Dunbar United Church of Christ**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Coffee Hour Sponsored by Sparkplugs				1	2	<b>3</b> 5:00pm Worship Service
<b>4</b> <u>Second Sunday of Advent</u> 10:00am Worship Service Communion 11:00am Coffee Hour 11:00am <b>Mission Meeting</b>	<b>5</b> 7:00pm Bible Study	<b>6</b> 5:30-8:00pm Girl Scouts – Hall (D. French)	<b>7</b> 7:30pm <b>Trustee's Meeting-Hall</b>	8	<b>9</b> 6-9 pm Girl Scouts- Hall (M. Nabors)	<b>10</b> 5:00pm Worship Service
<b>11</b> <u>Third Sunday of Advent</u> ADVENT WORKSHOP 10:00am Worship Service 11:00am Coffee Hour 11:00am <b>CE Meeting</b>	<b>12</b> 7:00pm Bible Study- Parish House  6-8pm Girl Scouts – Hall (Kathy Seneco Troop 64159 Leader)	13	<b>14</b> 12pm WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP CHRISTMAS PARTY (HALL)	<b>15</b> 7:30pm <b>Council Meeting</b> – Hall	16	<b>17</b> 5:00pm Worship Service
<b>18</b> <u>Fourth Sunday of Advent</u>  10:00am Worship Service 11:00am Coffee Hour 11:00am <b>Deacons Meeting</b> 4:00PM CHRISTMAS CAROLLING	<b>19</b> <b>Dome Reports/Announcements Due</b>  7:00pm Bible Study	<b>20</b> 5:30- 8:00pm Girl Scouts – Hall (D. French)	21	<b>22</b> <b>Dome Mailout</b>	23	<b>24</b> <b>Christmas Eve</b>  5:00pm Christmas Eve Service
<b>25</b> <b>Christmas</b>  10:00am Worship Service 11:00am Coffee Hour	<b>26</b> 7:00pm Bible Study	27	28	29	30	<b>31</b> <b>New Years Eve</b> 5:00pm Worship Service

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