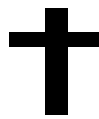


Rev. .George Manukas
Minister
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Under the
Dome

Geneene Luedee
Church Secretary
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Dunbar United Church of Christ

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

January, 2012

It's ironic that we have to wait until Christmas is over to finally sit down and catch our breath and rest. The first Christmas was not like this one we just finished. Life was slow. There were no seasonal demands to shop and bake and do cards and travel on ungodly, jammed, treacherous highways and through airports like herds of cattle. In Luke's gospel there are shepherds in the dead-quiet night and skies flooded with stars like most of us haven't seen in our lifetimes, the silence broken by bleating sheep or the wind. There was a birth in a manger, not the maternity ward of a busy hospital with lights and machines making beeping noises and nurses and doctors checking blood pressure every five minutes. Things were slow and quiet then and if the sky was bright, it was with natural light, not the polluted glow that we have that hides the stars. Maybe there are parts of Africa, or the Australian outback, that might approach the solitude and beauty of the first Christmas when Jesus of Nazareth was born, but we'd have to go to some trouble to find such a place.

In our Bible for Beginners group that meets every Monday night, I shared a story of something that recently happened. I was at the dentist having a crown put on one of my teeth. The dentist was drilling away at the tooth, making a stump out of it so the crown would fit on it, and she's drilling and grinding and bits of enamel are flying and I'm breathing that burning smell of the smoking-hot drill against the tooth. I'm lying there with my mouth stretched and thanking God for the person who invented novocain, when the dentist and the dental assistant start talking to each other. It was such a funny situation because I've never had a dentist actually having a conversation with an assistant while she or he was drilling in my mouth. The dentist was great and I had faith in her but I also thought, "Hello -- let's not get too carried away with this conversation." But it was fascinating because they were talking about Christmas and

how stressed they were with all the obligations. The assistant said, "I still have all these presents I need to buy..." And the dentist said, "Me too. And we have to travel and visit relatives so we have to prepare for the trip and get the shopping done." So when she took a little break from the drilling I said, "Sounds like you guys are going to be relieved when Christmas is over."

There are people I've read about who resolved to resist "the Christmas machine" of our culture. But even those people are stressed from the effort it takes to avoid the media bombardment, the presents, cakes, cookies, hams, turkeys, drinks, cards, trips. Just writing this and thinking about the holiday-activity-treadmill makes me anxious. Give me xanax -- a drink -- something. But what do I really need? What do we need? That's the problem. We've become such spinning tops, moving, moving, moving all the time that we can't discern what's necessary from what isn't. To hear the quiet voice of our souls we have to stop and listen. We need to reclaim the practice of sabbath time.

Moses received the Ten Commandments from God on the holy Mt. Sinai. He made a few trips up there. The commandments weren't given to him while he was busy leading the Israelites. He had to separate, be alone, be quiet to receive God's word. But receiving the law isn't the only thing that happened to him. Yes, that was big, but that's not the most important thing that happened there in the wilderness between Moses and God and the 600,000 or so people he was leading. The escape of the whole nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt, the killing of Pharaoh and his army, the parting of the Red Sea, and even the Ten Commandments were events that shaped the story of the Bible, but for me, the biggest event that changed the whole course of Biblical history was the change that happened in the heart of Moses. At first he begged God to spare him the ordeal of leading a nation of people he really didn't care about. He wanted his quieter life with his family in Midian. But in the course of leading the people, and living with them and sharing their joys and hardships, he fell in love with them -- even the rotten ones, the scoundrels, the ones the Bible calls "stiff necked." When God wanted to kill all the Israelites for betraying him and worshipping the golden calf, Moses told God, "What they did was wrong. I'm also angry and heartbroken about what they did. But if you kill them you have to kill me too because I'm one of them now."

For me, this is one of the high-points of the Bible, and it anticipates the life and death of Jesus Christ because Jesus taught the same thing. Jesus said, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." And when you read the gospels, you see that "friends" is the same to Jesus as "neighbors," which means -- EVERY HUMAN BEING. And this is the mystery of Christmas which is so anesthetized and diluted and spoiled by our culture. But if we can find our Mt. Sinai -- if we can make Sabbath times in our days where we find quiet and listen to the words of scripture, and to the movements within our souls, this is what we will hear. God has put Christ into each of us -- not each of us Christians, but each of us human beings: Christians,

Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, agnostics, atheists, Hindus, blacks, whites, and all shades between those. Christ is in each of us and joins us as a family -- the human family, and we rise and fall with one another. Nothing happens to one of us that doesn't affect the rest. And when we love one another so much that we will give our lives for our friends - - which is every human being -- then we will have discovered Christmas.

Yours, from Mt. Sinai, on Dunbar Hill Road,
George



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

**Barbara Hamilton • Pete Laffin • Jordan Jacques • Felix Mazur
Jean Copeland • Jennifer Johnson's husband • Mabel French**



Best wishes to all those celebrating birthdays & anniversaries in January...

8th **Matthew Jacques** Birthday
14th **Paul DeStefano** Birthday
16th **Nicole Jacques** turning 35
21st **Taylor and Jordan Jacques** turning 19
21st **Demi Luedee** turning 15



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.



Board of Christian Education

As the calendar year comes to a close the Board of Christian Education would like to thank the many volunteers who helped out this year. We are truly blessed to have such an enthusiastic group. The past few weeks we have been practicing for our Advent play and planning for Advent workshop. On December 11th, the children participated in the play during church. They all did a marvelous job. Afterwards, the children were able to enjoy the many crafts during Advent workshop and a pizza lunch provided by the Board of CE. Thank you to the congregation for providing the many wonderful desserts. We are looking forward to the new year. A sign up sheet for Sunday School teachers has been posted in the Narthex. Please consider volunteering to teach for one or two (or more) Sundays.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Braen



MISSIONS

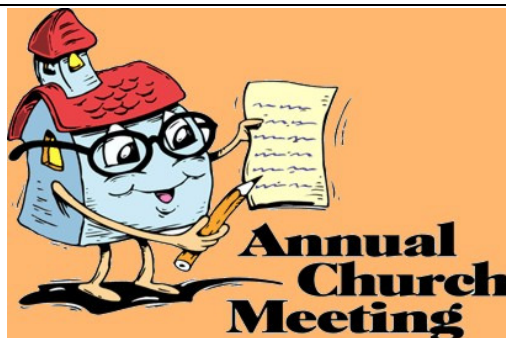
We will be collecting clothing, bedding, sheets, etc for Big Brothers/Big Sisters **until January 8.**



Women's Fellowship

This past month, the Women's Fellowship ran a sachet table at Advent Workshop and had a Potluck Christmas Luncheon with a traditional Yankee Swap! **SAVE THE DATE-SOUP LUNCHEON JANUARY 11 AT NOON.** Looking forward to hot soups and warm fellowship and no snow!

In December Missions sent boxes to Afghanistan and Washington State for our soldiers, helped with the Hamden Fuel Bank, the Children's Center in Hamden, and the Hamden Food Bank. We also collected clothes for the Big Brother/Big Sister program on State Street. Thanks to all that helped!



January 22, 2012 Annual Meeting

Reports due by **January 10** from Boards and Committee's!!

The Annual Meeting will be **Sunday, January 22**
(Snow date will be Sunday, January 29)!!



DEACONS

The Deacons committee met on December 4, 2011. During this time we discussed the Christmas Eve service to will be held on Saturday December 24th at 5 p m. We also made plans for organizing poinsettia sales and decorated the church for Christmas. The Deacons discussed and coordinated efforts for our healing service which was held Sunday December 18, 2011. The service went very well and we thank everyone who participated!

As many of you may have noticed, we reviewed and recently incorporated a UCC statement of Faith that will be added to the church service every third Sunday and started in November. It will appear in the Sunday bulletin for that week. We also discussed communion and having communion service January 8th rather than the first Sunday of January which is New Years Day.

We continue to keep Jordan Jacques and other members in our prayers and thank you to everyone who made cards and notes for Jordan. We also discussed specific visits to members that are ill or unable to get to service during our meeting.

I have returned safely from Haiti and changed by this trip. It was a wonderful experience for me as a physician and as a Christian. The need in Haiti is so great that I wish I could have done more in the short time I was there. We did see and treat 400 patients during our time there.... amazing! All of the supplies and contributions from church members were appreciated and much needed. We sent 2 patients with suspicious breast masses to hospital for further work up with some of the donations made by Dunbar members. Thank you all for your support which was, in itself, inspiring! George and I are planning on having another talk about the trip so I can share more with you.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!!

Thank you and God Bless,
Heather Sibley (hls157@aol.com)
Nicole Jacques (nicolejacques23@yahoo.com)



Surviv-Al Bracelets for Jordan Jacques!

A PORTION OF THE PROCEEDS THAT ARE COLLECTED FOR THESE LIMITED EDITION PURPLE SUPPORT BRACELETS ARE BEING DONATED WITH PRIDE TO JORDAN JACQUES, PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SURVIVOR.

Two styles available : Please look at the picture, there is Black on Black with a Purple Support Ribbon, Or Purple on Black with a Purple Support Ribbon, please be sure to specify which style you would like.

Send Check or Money Order made Payable to Al Jacques at New Beginnings Tattoo, 80 Quinnipiac St, Wallingford, CT 06492.

Credit Cards accepted with a minimum charge of \$60.00: Please call 203 889 1632. Free standard shipping to the lower 48 states, upon receipt of cleared payment. They will ship within 72 hours of cleared payment. Please allow standard shipping times of 7 to 10 business. If you would like overnight shipping or a tracking number additional fees may apply, please email or call with this request. OR for cash, or immediate purchase please stop by at the address above, from 5pm to 9 pm Monday thru Saturday.

**** PLEASE NOTE ****

STANDARD SIZE BRACELET IS 8.5", THIS TYPICALLY WILL FIT A 7 INCH WRIST. IF YOU ARE UNSURE OF THE SIZE, OR IF YOU NEED A SPECIAL SIZE (LARGER OR SMALLER) PLEASE MEASURE YOUR WRIST SNUGGLY AND CONTACT (203) 889 1632.

Thank You!!



Connecticut Conference
United Church of Christ

125 Sherman Street
Hartford, CT 06105-2281

Advent, 2011

Pastors, Congregations, Lay Leaders,

We kindergarteners, standing on tip toe, on the front pews of the great sanctuary in my home church, looked like angels in our snow white surpluses, so lovingly ironed at home beforehand. As the Christmas pageant drew to a crescendo, the organ and choirs burst into a magnificent rendition of “Joy to the World.” At that very second, we angels thrust our electric candles heavenward, stretching as tall as we could manage. It was like we thought by sheer force, we could project the light and joy of Christ’s birth into every corner of the universe!

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Thanks to your generosity, our Connecticut Conference is able to thrust high that light and joy- needed in our time every bit as much as in 1st Century Palestine. We do this by resourcing you and your congregation to minister in highly effective ways for the 21st Century, and by representing you in the ministry and mission of the United Church of Christ at home and around the globe.

A significant portion of the funding for this work comes from your gifts to OCWM (Our Church’s Wider Mission), and right now, OCWM receipts look significantly reduced from this time last year. It is your giving that facilitates the ministry of your regional minister, makes possible other Conference staff and services, supports the Sherman Street office and a portion of Silver Lake’s program.

As a kindergartner, I could not have imagined the complexity of the challenges facing the Church in the 21st Century. Yet, our simple message of light and joy remains the same. Because of you, Christ’s ministry through your congregation and our Connecticut Conference remains bright and joyful, a beacon of hope piercing the darkness. For all of us at the Connecticut Conference, and the entire UCC, thanks for helping us thrust our candles high in an exuberant...

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Charles L. Wildman
Interim Conference Minister

2011-2012 Dunbar United Church of Christ

Pastor: Rev. George Manukas revonweb@sbcglobal.net; (203) 287-8106
Moderator: Jim Arseniadis aspetuck.appraisal@yahoo.com; (203) 605-8493 Cell
Treasurer: Joe Braen jbraen@comcast.net; (203) 230-8043
Assistant Treasurer: Mark Rosa Mark.Rosa@beiinc.com; (203) 287-9927
Clerk: Sandra Kops sandrakops@aol.com; (203) 288-2535
Sexton: Victor Mitchell vicm56@aol.com
Secretary: Geneene Luedee ducc67@sbcglobal.net; (203) 288-2342
Hall Rentals: Geneene Luedee ducc67@sbcglobal.net; (203) 288-2342
Web Site: Nancy Braen njbraen@comcast.net; (203) 230-8043
Nominations: Bruce Detmers brdetmers@snet.net; (203) 248-6201
Altar Flowers: Betty Detmers brdetmers@snet.net; (203) 248-6201
Budget: Steve Hurd stephen.hurd@kemira.com; (203) 281-5429

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)
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)
Bel 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

Women's Fellowship

Deb Laffin (President)
Barbara Walters (Vice President)

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