

Rev. George Manukas
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Treasurer: Joe Braen



Under the
Dome...

Dunbar United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

767 Benham Street, Hamden, CT 06514

September, 2011

Recently I went to church with my mother-in-law and enjoyed the experience of being among the congregation and worshiping from the pew. The scripture reading that morning was one of my favorites -- the prophet Elijah was hiding from the evil king Ahab and his wicked wife, Jezebel. Elijah had just killed 450 of Jezebel's prophets and she vowed to kill him within 24 hours. Elijah became frightened of Jezebel and ran away to take refuge at Mount Horeb, the holy place where God called Moses from the burning bush. The struggle with Ahab and Jezebel so exhausted Elijah that he was ready to quit. He told God he wanted to die and asked to be taken from this life. The evil forces he was fighting were too powerful for him, just one person, to contend with.

Elijah waited for God's answer from the opening of a cave on Mount Horeb. A huge wind blew by that split mountains and broke rocks to pieces, "but the Lord was not in the wind." Then an earthquake came, and a fire, but the Lord wasn't in those either. Finally there was "a sound of sheer silence" (other translations say "a still small voice"). Then God spoke to Elijah.

That's the background for the sermon my mother-in-law and I heard that morning in church. The message of the sermon was: We all need to find quiet times so we can hear God speak to us. It was a twenty minute sermon but that was pretty much the message -- and I was frustrated because I felt that the minister was leaving out the most important part, which is: When we find the quiet place and listen, then what can we expect to hear God saying to us? What is it that God speaks from "the still small voice?" He didn't say! I think too many ministers leave this part out of their sermons because they are afraid that they might anger members of their congregation.

But this is our (minister's) job! My job in the sermon is to translate from the ancient words of scripture the words God is speaking today. This is why I went to school and studied for seven-plus years and went through the whole excruciating process of being ordained -- and why I keep studying and listening with every perceptive faculty I have -- so I can take the risk, the effort, to translate emotions and words and insights from another world to this world that you and I are more familiar with.

So I'm going to finish that minister's sermon here in this Dome -- because it's my job, my calling. Because like I told you in a recent sermon, I can't shut up -- I can't keep these words inside. This is what I hear when I listen to God's words: I hear outrage and sadness: outrage towards those blessed with abundance, and sadness for those who struggle each day to get by. As our nation becomes more split and polarized, a spirit of selfishness chokes us and God rages against the hardness of our hearts. At the same time, God cries for the growing numbers of the poor and suffering in our land.

Look at our political life and you see a country that has lost its way -- has lost its sense of community, its sense that we are all in this together, that we are all one family and look after one another. Instead, more people look out for their own interests and few want to sacrifice for the sake for helping others in need. I hear so many people saying, "No way -- I don't want my taxes paying for another person's medical care -- I don't want these immigrants taking my job and benefits -- what's mine is mine, and I intend to keep it." This is the kind of talk that comes from a sick soul. This is the kind of talk that comes from someone who has little faith, little trust that it is God who bestows our blessings, not Wall Street or our own efforts.

Right now is a good time to be rich in America. Corporations and the wealthy pay politicians to make laws that favor them so that billionaires like Warren Buffet joke: "My cleaning lady pays more taxes than I do!" Our congress and senate are like a shopping mall where lobbyists for banks and oil companies buy as many lawmakers as they like, indifferent to the damage those laws inflict on the weak.

Listen to these words God spoke through the prophet Amos: "You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lamb and veal. You strum away on your harps like David, and improvise on musical instruments. You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph." These words are almost three thousand years old, but God is still speaking them. To us. Now.

But did Amos hear encouraging words from God which we might also hear today in the midst of our tragedy, the disintegration of our nation? Yes.

God tells us the same words spoken to Elijah that day at the opening of the cave on Mount Horeb: "Go back, Elijah (substitute your name here). Your work is not done -- I'm not finished with you yet. The king and his wife and government are rotten so I send you again to fight them -- until there are leaders who serve all my children, not just the privileged. Go now -- that is my will."

Of course the odds are against us. The laws of probability suggest that we are too small and our enemies too large, and we will be crushed -- we have no chance in this battle. But that's what people told Moses when he approached pharaoh's court to declare his mission to free the Israelites. That's what people told David at the Valley of Elah as he prepared to fight Goliath.

Yours, from the opening of a small cave in Hamden,

George

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

- Steven Laffin, who is now in Afghanistan with the 103rd Airborne out of Windsor Locks. He will be gone until next March.
- Paul Jacques



Please contact Rev. Manukas if you or someone you know would like a call or a visit @ 287-8106 or revonweb@sbcglobal.net

“Bible for beginners” starts September 12 @ 7pm and continues every Monday evening at 7:00pm in the upper level of the parish house.

Best wishes to all those celebrating their birthdays & anniversaries in September!!

8th Norman and Kim Chicoine will be celebrating their 21st wedding anniversary!!

8th Alexandra Shettleworth...17th Birthday!

17th Lawrence and Ellyn will be celebrating their 16th wedding anniversary!!

Women's Fellowship



We have met several times this summer to complete bazaar items, help with scholarship, and get organized for our Apple Festival. Please put on your calendar OCTOBER 22 for Apple Festival Day! Pie making will start Sept. 7, 9:30 and will continue every Wed. until Oct 12. The following week we will be working Oct. 19, 20 & 21. Anyone can order pies ahead by calling Ginny Granquist at 203 877-8858 or call the church on Wed. mornings from 9:30 to 11:30a.m. Our wonderful 10" pies are still just \$10 this year! Please save those really great items you were thinking of disposing of for our Grandma's Attic, Grandpa's tool shed, jewelry table, toys, and bazaar tables. Anyone wanting to help out with any of our activities can call me at 203 281-3241. Women's Fellowship will be providing desserts for our Rally Day on September 11. Hope to see you then! Debbie Laffin

Missions



We have had a successful (but sometimes critter visited) garden this year. Many thanks to all those that have put in some time to make sure we had produce to give away.

Missions has donated to First Church of Monson in Monson, MA after the tornado had caused so much destruction. Peter and I went to see the situation and couldn't believe how bad the main street looked. The front of the church was damaged and the bell tower lost, but repairs are already happening. The high school was not usable as all the windows are gone. There are so many buildings damaged including old brick buildings that have been there so long. We went by one street with no houses, only to see a group of trailer homes at the end where people are living until houses get rebuilt. Missions is looking to support Heather Sibley in her journey to Haiti, Operation Christmas Child, possibly the Fisher House and other important actions.

Please remember Operation Christmas Child will be collected on November 12 and missions will cover the cost of sending your shoebox. You choose age, boy/girl, and the items can not include liquids, anything that looks war related (i.e., water pistols, toy guns or war figures, etc.), Great items are hair combs/brushes/headbands/bows, toothbrushes, small toys, crayons and books/paper, candy, t-shirts, lipbalm, baby toys, race cars, etc. and feel free to include a letter from you! Heather needs the following: adult multivitamins, children's chewable vitamins, any tylenol (adult, children's and infant) tums, cough drops, powdered infant formula, peptobismol, gentle bars of soap, toothpaste. all items need to be new and not opened. or financial contributions will help her group get the best buy for certain items.

She has a tax ID # if needed. Anything for Heather needs to be collected by October 2 (earlier if possible). Looking forward to the next season with all of you!

Debbie

Church School and Childcare Begin September 11th

We have had a wonderful summer learning about the bible during Summer Bible Story Time. We even got to do some cool crafts when the weather didn't cooperate for playing outside. We will continue to have Summer Bible Story Time until Rally Day, September 11th.

Church school is in session on Sundays from September through June for all the children of Dunbar Church and their friends beginning at age 4. Church school begins on Rally Day, September 11th. Our "One Room Schoolhouse", located on the upper level of the parish house, is a vibrant place for learning about our church and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Lessons are taught by dedicated members and include many hands-on activities.

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 ones for fun and play while you enjoy the Sunday Service!!

Consider Volunteering to Teach!!!

We are in need of volunteers to teach Sunday School. No experience is necessary and all supplies are provided. Lesson plans are easy to follow and you can pick and choose which activities you wish to do. Sign up to teach one or more classes by seeing Nancy Braen after church, or emailing njbraen@comcast.net.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Braen.

Are you receiving our Weekly Newsletter, Under The Dome, via email? If not, email Geneene and she will add you to our Weekly Newsletter List!!
ducc767@sbcglobal.net



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 @ 11am

The festivities begin right after the 10am Church Service!! Bring your friends and neighbors for a fun filled afternoon with food and laughter!!

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.

Visit our website at www.dunbarchurch.com

Find us on 

2011 Dunbar United Church of Christ

Pastor:	Rev. George Manukas	revonweb@sbcglobal.net ; (203) 287-8106
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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)

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

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)

Pastoral Relations

Meg Nowacki (Chair)
 Jim Arseniadis
 Judy Campbell
 Steve Hurd
 Betty Detmers

Trustee's

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

Columbarium

Bruce Detmers (Chair)
 Bob Corona
 Betty Detmers
 Ellyn Liseo
 Barbara Walters
 Chuck Walters
 Ann Watjen

Christian Education

Nancy Braen (2012 Chair)
 Donna Burkbuckler (2012)
 Janet Lavorgna (2012)
 Cindy Long (2012)
 Libby Wamser (2012)
 Bell Forte (2014)

Publicity

Cindy Long
 Tom Parlapiano

Memorial Gifts

Ginny Granquist
 Meg Nowacki