

February, 2012

The Rev. Says....

This is the longest article I've written in years. Read if you must.

I offended some of you when I make a crack about things that irritate us and used as an example that while most of us are paying at a 30% tax rate, a few of the very rich are paying at a 15% rate. I said I found that irritating – for the simple reason that I do. (Sermon of January 29.)

While I did not mention Gov. Romney by name, people filled in the blank. And while I didn't mention President Obama or Warren Buffet or the State of the Union Address, those blanks were filled in as well.

So....bear with me.

First, and foremost, please know that I regard Gov. Romney is a straight arrow. He is a morally upstanding, smart, financially successful, Presidential candidate who is devoted to his faith (and substantiated by an enviable record of charitable giving). Not only that, he paid precisely and exactly all the taxes that were due. To the best of my knowledge, all these things are true.

It's the tax law itself that I find irritating. You may think it is fine as it is. There's room for argument – maybe all day long. Had I been a tiny bit wiser, I'd have found another illustration to make my point.

All of which reminds me (as if we needed reminding) that we are in an election year. Tempers are high; tolerance is low. I must remember to be more careful about how I choose my words.

BUT, it is clear to me (and to everyone?) that our nation is facing serious economic issues, and that some serious economic decisions need to be made. Obstructionist politics are not helping us – and it doesn't matter whether the obstructing party is Republican or Democratic. We have to make our way through this *together*. Is either party listening....?

Do we have too much government? It would be hard to argue that we have too little. Are we going deeper and deeper in debt? Obviously. Are the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer? That's what I'm told. Are people struggling to make ends meet? That's true for many. Do I know exactly how best to correct these things? Most assuredly not.



What I'm listening for in this election year is for the candidates to make some sense out of *these* issues. I suspect most of you share that perspective.

Interestingly, most of us in this congregation live careful lives in which we've done our best to work hard, spend carefully, live honestly and live as faithful disciples of Christ. Some of us carry voter registrations cards that say, "Republican." some have cards that say, "Democrat" – and no doubt a few that say, "Independent." Our opinions probably vary far more than our lifestyles.

At any rate, I'll try to keep the unhelpful comment rate down in the pulpit. If I fail, it's probably due to poor judgment on my part. Except when the Gospel itself is offensive, which makes my job difficult from time to time.

One more thought.

I'm wondering how we might be able to have some conversations during this election year in which we could put forward our best questions, and see what the candidates actually have to say about them. If we can find a way to have civil discourse in an election year, that would surely be something to brag about. I'm serious about this – if you have any ideas about how to accomplish this, let me know!

Peace to you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Dunfee".

Mike Dunfee

P.S. During a conversation with Les Ball, I asked him to read this article and encouraged him to write one from his own perspective, in part to demonstrate that civil dialogue really is possible. Happily he was able to produce one in record time – you'll want to read it!



TO BE REMEMBERED
IN OUR PRAYERS

- Ed Devine at home
- Carol Boscow at home
- Marcia Sprague Gantshar at Norwell Knoll
- Betty Luce at home
- Margaret Allen at Life Care
- Charlotte Bangs at Life Care
- Madeleine VonInderstein at Life Care
- Jean Stanley at Renaissance Gardens
- Jim Jenkins, Mary Jenkins father-in-law
- Paul Gunn, battling cancer
- Dave Muise, Huntington's disease (Nancy Archibald's son-in-law)
- William Higgins, colon cancer (Nancy Spear)
- Linda Pallota (Maureen McCarthy)
- Jeanne Fay, lung cancer (Dot Sime's sister)
- Bill Van Note at home
- Dottie Fiori, ALS (Marge Manning)
- Mark Eikenberry, Colon Cancer (Jane & Jack Warner's Nephew)
- Barbara & Bill DeMers on the recent death of their grandson, Kevin Ballantine



**TOGETHER IN WORSHIP
IN JANUARY**

- January 1 – 61
- January 8 – 121
- January 15 – 111
- January 22– 86
- January 29 - 112



FOR FEBRUARY

02/23 Joanne & Bruce Damrell (10)



FOR FEBRUARY

- 02/02 Evan D'Onofrio
- 02/03 Mary Dale
Lee Vickers
Doug Calnan
- 02/14 Mary Smith
- 02/15 John Miller, III
- 02/22 Jeanne Damaso
Joseph Daileader
Andrew Smith
- 02/23 Barbara Thornton
Gabrielle Brassard
- 02/25 Sally Salvador
Michael Monaco
Daniel Monger
- 02/29 Mary Wagner



RED HAT MOMMAS

Wednesday, February 15
2:00 p.m.
Lunch at Mill Wharf
Please RSVP by Monday, Feb. 132
\$2.00 dues are due at that time.
Thank you, Gloria Bamford

Different Eyes – Same Landscape

By Les Ball

I'm the guy that sent Mike an e-mail about his comment in Sunday's sermon about Romney's tax rate. I felt that a good man who had paid his taxes appropriately was being maligned. So, wasn't I surprised when I opened my Monday's Wall Street Journal to see an op-ed piece by Rabbi Aryeh Spero entitled, "What the Bible Teaches About Capitalism." It spoke to me and, of course, I sent a copy to Mike. Mike read it and said that the Rabbi is reading a different Bible than he is.

So, the old mind got to thinking. What's wrong with this picture? We all worship the same God and have very similar spiritual needs. But our views of the world differ and that colors the way that we hear the news and interpret the events of the day. For instance, I keep hearing that the middle class is being hurt more and more economically. Yet, last week a study from Georgetown University over 30 years looked at the population cut into low income, middle income, and high income people. They found that during this period the percent of people in the low income category stayed the same BUT the percent in the middle income went down. This means that the population is getting richer which is not bad. Now, I realize that some will say that we are comparing apples and oranges or others will show another study that proves just the opposite.

It's all about the color of the glasses that we look through. But, we have big problems facing this country that need to be addressed and partisan politics is getting in the way of any meaningful dialogue. I remember Tip O'Neil saying that Ronald Reagan's policies were 180 degrees different than his own but that Reagan was the guy he'd enjoyed playing poker with most of all. Can you imagine Harry Reid and John Boehner playing poker together?

I love this church and everyone in it. The issues that we are facing as a nation need to be looked at the lens of "What would Jesus do?" (Hackneyed but cute.) But the question remains how do we have a meaningful discussion about these issues, in the context of our Christian beliefs, that are facing this country without me offending you or you offending me? If you have an answer, I'd love to hear it.



FTCC Financials

July 2011 – Dec 2011

Income	\$189,880	\$1,900 over budget
Expenses	<u>177,223</u>	\$5,600 under budget
Net Gain	<u>\$ 12,657</u>	

Notes: Administrative costs are lower with increased use of email and reduced copier expense. Church buildings costs are lower with reduced heat and electricity expense partially offset by increased maintenance costs. A good first six months of the year.

Wayne Morrill, Treasurer

**Schedules and Assignments
February 2012**

	February 5	February 12	February 19	February 26
Preaching	Rev. Mike Dunfee	Rev. Mike Dunfee	Rev. Mike Dunfee	Guest Preacher

Music	Senior Choir	Senior Choir	Senior Choir	Senior Choir
Liturgist	Tom Hall			
Greeters & Ushers	Tom Hall, Allan Sylvester, Shirley Southwort, Penny Cohen	Marshall Litchfield, Marty Morrill, Peter Leavitt Peter Stanley	George White, Susie Schollin, Leslie & John Kibiloski	Elizabeth Naylor, Lindy Backus, Patsy Oehl, Kim Trudeau
Acolyte				
Servers	Doug Wilcox, Lisa Shilts, Steve Collins, Dana Blanks, Mary Ann Hermance, Jennifer Smollett			
Coffee Hour	Church School	Marge Manning, Mary Smith, Diane Weydt, Nancy Lowrey	Diane Roder	The Lemieux Family
Flowers	Jamie Schweer	Mae & Bob Roth	Karen Rhoten	Pam Gillespie
Special Events		6:30 – 9:00pm ASP meeting	Ashley Holmes speaking about her Peace Corps experience Mainspring	