



The Dover Church

"A Welcoming Community of Faith and Service since 1762"

November 26, 2013

Volume 4, Issue 10

News from Meeting House Hill

To the Church of Jesus Christ in Dover:

"May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2).

On Sunday, December 1, we begin Advent, the season of waiting. Contrary to what most people think, Advent is not a season of waiting for Christmas. Rather, we are waiting for all the hopes of the Christ event to become real **again** in our world. That is why the Advent worship can be disconcerting for those of us who are actually waiting for Christmas and find ourselves in church in December because church is a Christmas-y sort of thing to do. The songs are often slightly plaintive and wistful. The prayers are for a future light in our present darkness. The readings are often future tense and edgy. We don't do a lot of Advent here at The Dover Church, maybe a Sunday or two before we jump to the Christmas Pageant and Lessons and Carols.

The fact is, I treasure Advent because it captures so much of the spiritual reality in which we live our lives. While the promises of God as spoken by the prophets are heart warming, and while the Kingdom of God as preached and lived by Jesus is compelling, that's not how the world is. At least not fully. Sure, there are glimmers of God's kingdom breaking through here and there, there are moments of translucence from time to time, but there is also a lot of darkness, perhaps even a preponderance of darkness if we were to view life from the perspective of, oh, the streets of Calcutta say, or Damascus, or the Congo...

If that's all there was to it. If there was no hope to live towards. If we only had this present moment. While we do only have this present moment to live the reality of our lives in (as in we can neither physically relive the past nor live the potentiality of the future until it is present) without the future of hope before us, the present can seem like a dead end. Especially if it is a present without the power, wisdom and glory of God as impetus of the course of creation. And so, I walk in the gathering darkness of December with candles of hope burning in my heart, humming in a minor key, songs of hope.

By the grace of God,
Max - your pastor

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LOOKING AHEAD

December 1
First Advent Sunday

December 8
Second Advent Sunday
Advent Workshop

December 15
Third Advent Sunday
Christmas Pageant

December 22
Fourth Advent Sunday
Lessons & Carols

December 24
Christmas Eve
Services at
4 pm, 7 pm & 11 pm

See inside calendar for more details.

Upcoming Services:

Advent Workshop
Sunday, December 8th

On **Sunday, December 8th**, we have an Advent Workshop planned for our Sunday Fellowship time.

Everyone is invited to join us to create a family advent wreath. We will also have holiday crafts. Come make an edible winter scene.

Annual Christmas Pageant
Sunday, December 15th

Join us on Sunday, December 15th, at 10:00 am, as we celebrate our Annual Christmas pageant. Our Sunday School students have a wonderful surprise for us with a delightful new pageant. The pageant will take place during our 10 am worship service. We know that all of our members, young and old, will enjoy hearing the Christmas story from our children's perspective. Please see additional information about the pageant in our Youth Programming section.

Lessons and Carols
Sunday, December 22nd

The Dover Church will have its Lessons and Carols service on Sunday, December 22 at 10 a.m. The service is based on six lessons with responsive carols for congregation, choir, brass and organ. The six lesson outline is an alternative to the nine lesson version, developed by the Royal School of Church Music. The service, over the years at the Dover Church, has often been described with words containing the phrase - "now it feels like Christmas!" Come rejoice, with heart and soul and voice.

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Christmas Eve Services

We have three services on Christmas Eve, a little something for everyone. At **4:00 pm**, our **Family Christmas Service** will be geared towards families and children. We will again have a "Mitten Tree". **Please bring with you a pair of new mittens or a new hat to place on the tree.** Your generous donations will be given to Cradles to Crayons.

Our **7:00 pm** service is a **traditional candlelight service** and our **11:00 pm** service will include **candlelight and communion.**

We will be collecting a special offering on Christmas Eve which will go to the Christmas Fund. The Christmas Fund offering (sometimes called Veterans of the Cross offering) is an expression of appreciation and caring to those who served as clergy (and certain lay employees) who are now retired or disabled and financially strained. During this holy time of year, the offering is a profound gift. It helps provide pension supplements, health premium subsidies, emergency assistance to active or retired clergy families, and Christmas gift checks to hundreds of retirees and to those who are disabled.

Sermon Series Coming in January

I have often thought that we might benefit by spending some extended time on specific subjects in Sunday worship, as in several Sundays in a row at which everything is about forgiveness, or God and poverty, or prayer, or faith and science, or Christianity and other faiths. I have also often thought that we might benefit even more if members of the worshipping congregation had taken some time to give some thought to the subject for Sunday worship beforehand.

The best way to do this, the way it is done in many vibrant churches throughout the country, is for everyone who is interested to read the same book and then I will preach on the subject, addressing the author's perspective, and shaping the scripture, music and prayers to coordinate. As luck would have it, we tend to have two month long blocks of time every year when there are no holy days or significant shifts in the liturgical calendar: late September-early October and mid January-mid February. The summer is also perfect for this, by the way...

The further beauty of this idea is, say, you intend to ski in January and February, you can still
(continued)

(Sermon Series, continued)

follow along via the reading, my blog, and perhaps some of you have other ideas how we might create an ongoing conversation...**YOU CAN STILL GO SKIING AND EXPAND YOUR FAITH HORIZONS.**

I am very interested to hear what subjects you would like to have serialized. Please let me know for future series.

My own personal preference for the first series, which will run this coming January 26, February 2 & 9 is Sabbath: How to break out of the busy-ness of our lives. Stay tuned for additional information on our Sermon Series and for the book title, which will be available either on Amazon or we can order you one if you prefer.

Youth Programming:

Annual Christmas Pageant

All Sunday School students welcome to participate. Our annual Christmas Pageant will be performed during worship service on Sunday, December 15. The third through seventh grade students have been rehearsing for the past few weeks. All other students from the pre-kindergarten to seventh grade are welcome to join the pageant as shepherds, animals or part of the "Heavenly host" (aka angels). **If your child would like to participate in one of these parts, please come to the dress rehearsal on Saturday, December 14 at 4:30 pm in Kraft Hall.** The rehearsal will run about an hour. We will run through the pageant once or twice, and the children will get their costumes. They will take the costumes home with them and wear them to church on Sunday. They should plan to **be at church at 9:30 on Sunday, December 15** to warm up and get organized.

If your child is interested in participating, please email Kristen Dennison at kristen.dennison@gmail.com to let her know. It would also be helpful to know if your child wants to be a shepherd, angel or animal so that we can be sure to have the appropriate costumes available.

Confirmation

Our confirmation class will be visiting the Islamic Center of Boston, in Wayland, MA, on **Sunday, December 8th** as part of their confirmation studies. Please meet at the church shortly before 11:45 am.

Sunday School

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We continue to use Godly Play for our Pre-K and Kindergarten class. We will be traveling the road to Bethlehem as we learn about Mary, Joseph, shepherds, wise men and the star they followed to find the Christ Child.

Our older classes are using the Feasting on the Word curriculum which has been following the weekly scripture readings in worship. All of our Sunday School students are singing carols in preparation for our pageant.

Youth Group

Our first Work Camp fundraiser is coming up on December 22nd. We will be delivering Carol-O-Grams to homes around town. We will have a table during coffee hour on December 15th and 22nd to take sign ups

Serving Others:

Family Promise Hosting

We will be hosting our Family Promise guests again the week of December 15th. I will be sending out an eNews next week with a link to the volunteer sign up sheet. If you have not had an opportunity to volunteer with hosting, I hope you will sign up to help with this upcoming week.

Mitten Tree Collection

On Christmas Eve, during our 4:00 pm service, we will be collecting new mittens and hats to be donated to Cradles to Crayons. Please bring new hats and gloves or mittens with you to place on our Mitten tree. If you are unable to attend this service but would like to make a donation, please bring them by the church office before the 24th.



Fellowship Opportunities:

Ladies Lunch Bunch

The Ladies Lunch Bunch is holding a Holiday Gift Drive for Associated Early Care and Education, one of the groups we support. We hope that everyone in our congregation will consider participating in our gift drive. (continued)

(Ladies Lunch Bunch, continued)

Associated Early Care and Education has put together a list of age appropriate gift suggestions. It is also nice, during these types of drives, to be able to purchase a gift for a specific child. We have put together a list of the children in the Associated Early Care and Education's day center. You can sign up to purchase a gift for a specific child and then use the age appropriate gift suggestions to find a special gift for your child. Please visit [www.http://thedoverchurch.org/ladies-lunch-bunch/](http://thedoverchurch.org/ladies-lunch-bunch/) to view information about our drive and gift suggestions. Contact the church office for the list of children.

Please deliver all gifts to the church office by **Sunday, December 8th.** Gifts should be **unwrapped and labelled with the child's name, age and classroom.** We hope you will all enjoy sharing the Christmas spirit with these underprivileged children.



The Dolphin Group

The Dolphin Group is a group of senior and/or retired men who are members of the Dover Church. It meets for lunch the first Wednesday of every month at 12 noon at the Dolphin Restaurant in downtown Natick Center.



If you are interested in finding out more about this group or would like to join us on **Wednesday, December 4th at noon**, please RSVP by calling the church office.

Dover Church Band

The Dover Church Band was fabulous this past Sunday. The band will practice again on **Wednesday, December 11th and Wednesday, December 18th at 7:30 pm** in the music room. We are planning on playing again in worship on Epiphany, January 5th and again on Fat Sunday, March 2nd. (And maybe a special appearance on Christmas Eve at 4 pm!)

If you would like to join the band, please come on the 11th and the 18th! We welcome you. If you would like to be included on the email to our musicians, please let Beth Benjamin know, beth@thedoverchurch.org, or call the church office, 508-785-0957.

Men's Breakfast Group

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The December meeting of our Men's Breakfast Group will be on **Tuesday, December 10th at 7:00 pm.** Please meet Max in the Kraft Hall Kitchen to start for breakfast and conversation.

Carol-O-Grams

We are raising money for our Work Camp trip to Appalachia. We will deliver Carol-O-Grams to the families or individuals you ask us to. They need to be within a 20 minute drive of Dover. Our request is that you make a donation towards our work camp. We will be in coffee hour on December 15th and 22nd taking sign ups. If you can't be at coffee hour on these days and would like to send a Carol-O-Gram, please contact Beth Benjamin in the church office.



Sponsoring Flowers

Each week, we have beautiful flower arrangements on our altar during our worship service. These arrangements are sponsored by members of our congregation. There are opportunities available, after the start of the new year, to sponsor flowers. Anyone who would like to sponsor our worship flowers should contact Betty Brady. (doverhugh@comcast.net or 508-785-0790)

Stewardship:

Many thanks to everyone who has pledged to support our church for 2014. We will be printing a complete list on December 8th. (Anne Carter is away this week visiting family and has not had an opportunity to compile a complete list that includes our Agape Service pledges.)

Sanctuary Renovations Update:

The Structures North structural engineer was in recently taking photos and measurements in our steeple. Don Mills will be by this week with his plaster conservator.

We hope to have information to present to the congregation at our next Annual meeting in January.

Would You Like To Tell People Why You Come To Our Church?

All of us would like to welcome more of our neighbors into our faith and fellowship. The problem is that we are shy about faith. We feel uncomfortable talking to others about church, for fear they might think we are religious nuts. The good news is that our shyness is not a problem. The vast majority of people who visit a new church either do so because of the enthusiasm of a close friend or by visiting the church's website.

You yourselves will obviously be the best judges of whether you feel like sharing your church experience at The Dover Church with your closest friends. Our website, however, can be much more welcoming. Right now it is a lot of words and links. We would like people to meet people on our home page, meet the people of the Dover Church, meet the people who love the Dover Church, meet the people who love The Dover Church telling why they love the Dover Church.

In the near future, we will be sending out a sign up for people who would like to be filmed for a 30 second sound bite video which answers the question: "Why do I go to The Dover Church?" We would like to have a cross section of our congregation from Sunday School Students and Youth Groupers to our seniors, with families, multi-generational families, singles, couples. All you have to do is sign up to be filmed, either at your home or at the church. Start thinking about your answer now: why do you come to the Dover Church? If you have 5 minutes worth of answer, we'll have to break it into short segments. The finished clips will appear on the church homepage. If you are curious about what this will look like (but even better), go to the Pilgrim Church in Sherborn website. So keep your eyes peeled for the coming invitation to share your story.

Thank You, Dover Church!

Thank you, everyone, for the wonderful weekend celebrating 20 years of music making (Michael Kraft and the Fisk organ) at The Dover Church. Thank you, Sally Shoemaker and Francesca Wier for a fun party, and for poignant sermons on the power of music in the church; Betty Brady for beautiful flowers in Kraft Hall & the sanctuary; Peter Krasinski for a funky rendition

(continued)

(Thank you, continued)

of Carmen starring Charlie Chaplin, and the musicians who made Sunday's service beautiful, as usual. We would also like to thank the deacons and the congregation for the generous gifts of a night at the symphony and the beautiful Tiffany set.

We would like to recognize this remarkable congregation who invested in Opus 107 twenty years ago, a congregation who has supported a music program of high caliber for so many years. We would like to thank all the musicians who have contributed their talents over the past twenty years, the Stone family recorders, the bell ringers, the brass players, Shirley and Alan Williams, John Arcaro, and our band: McGregor, Bill, Mike, David, Stu, Bob, Fred and Max. Most of all, we would like to thank those people who give extraordinary gifts of time to their church each week: the choir - those men and women who, year after year, uplift and magnify the spiritual life of their church. You can see that many of their tenures are longer than either Michael's or the organ's! Thank you for your service. Bravo!
-Michael & Stacia Kraft

Mary Jane Law	-36 years
Sara Jo Marble	-35 years
Joan King	-32 years
Sally Shoemaker	-30 years
Carl Krause	-30 years
Roger Markhus	-30 years
Francesca Weir	-29 years
Rein Uritam	-28 years
Jane Moore	-26 years
Kathy Sullivan	-24 years
Gil Rodgers	-23 years
Lincoln Passmore	-23 years
Gunnar Heskestad	-23 years
Bob Cocks	-22 years
Flo Revers	-20 years
Nancy Walton	-18 years
Martha & Stu Baird	-15 years
Meredith Birdsall	-14 years
Michele Sauter	-10 years
Trudy Walsh	-8 years
Peggy Cross	-4 years
Rodney Petersen	-2 years
John Kraft	-1 year
Kori Khanna	-1 year



Care Ministry

Our Care Ministry Team is up and running and we have been busy. If you have a care or concern you would like us to know about please make sure to talk to Max, Beth or one of the Care Ministry Team members: Barbara Baker, Elizabeth Barnes, Bill Barrett, Peggy Cross, Margi Derien, Nancy Goodall, Grace Johnson, Nancy Mackay, Sally Shoemaker, and Nancy Simms. If you would like to join our Care Ministry Team, please let Beth Benjamin know.

A Leaf Clean Up Thank you!

We held two leaf clean ups this fall. Last Saturday the yard looked fabulous. We had removed most of the leaves. And then the wind blew! I think the grounds still look terrific and I want to thank our members who came out to help. Many thanks to John Gilbert, Karl and Aiden Johnson, Bob Graham and Dave Melville who helped this past weekend. I would also like to thank Anne and Jeff Carter, Klarina and Mike Donoghue, John Cone, Stu Baird and Liddy Rich for helping at our first clean up.



Karl Johnson, Bob Graham and Dave Melville

Animals for Christmas Eve

We are looking for farm animals to have during our 4:00 pm service on Christmas Eve. So far, we have not had any luck in finding a farm who would be willing to bring their animals to us at that time. If you know of a farm with sheep and other animals, please let Beth Benjamin know. Thank you!

Holiday Open Studio

Nancy Walton is hosting a Holiday Open Studio of her paintings on 12/6, 6 to 8 pm, 12/7, 11-4 pm, and 12/8, 12-5 pm. 25 May Street, Needham

Office Hours During Holidays

There will be reduced office hours during the holidays as Beth and Anne will be taking some vacation days. Please call the church to see when the office will be open. Please remember that you can always reach Max on his cell phone, 509-982-0422 at any time.

Wish List

This is the time of year for wish lists! We have a wish list here at the church. Do you have a **playroom area rug** (one with roads and train tracks or hop scotch on it) that you don't use any more? We would love to have it for our Family Promise hosting. Do you have a mixed box of **Legos** that isn't being used anymore? We could use them in our OWL class. Do you have a **TV** that would fit on a rolling cart (24" x 18")? Do you have an **artificial Christmas Tree** that you don't use anymore? If you have any of these items and you would like to donate them to the church, please contact Beth Benjamin in the office. Thank you!

"Newborn Necessities" Program

Kim Cone recently worked with Shelly Poulsen and the Dover Nursery School to collect items for the Vincent Club's "Newborn Necessities" program. All of the donations (and wow, were there a lot!) will be distributed to expecting mothers that are currently patients at Mass General's clinic in Chelsea. The women visiting the clinic are truly women in need. The Vincent Club packages the clothing donations into packets that usually include a onesie, hat, blanket, socks and an outfit. To say that these women appreciate the donations would be an understatement. They are truly grateful for the assistance. To find out more about the Vincent Club's "Newborn Necessities" program, please contact Kim Cone.

Holiday Concert

December 14, 2013, 7:30 pm, Sharon Middle School. The Roy Scott Big Band, with vocalist Ruth Debrot, will perform a truly joyful program featuring newer variations of familiar seasonal songs! You won't want to miss RSBB performing selections from "The Nutcracker Suite" by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn -- jazz interpretations of "The Nutcracker" by Tchaikovsky! (Come and see Mike Benjamin, who plays with this band.) <http://www.sharonbands.org>

December 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 First Advent Sunday Communion 8:30 AM Choir 10:00 AM Worship Service/ Sunday School	2 1:00 PM Al Anon	3	4 9:00 AM Al Anon 12:00 PM The Dolphin Group 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	5 4:15 PM Boston Assemblies 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	6	7 Dover Police COA Brunch
8 Second Advent Sunday Advent Workshop 8:30 AM Choir 10:00 AM Worship Service/ Sunday School 11:00 AM Advent Workshop 11:45 AM Confirmation Trip 6:30 PM OWL Class 7:00 PM HSYG	9 1:00 PM Al Anon	10 7:00 AM Men's Breakfast Group 7:30 PM Trustees' Meeting	11 9:00 AM Al Anon 7:00 PM Boy Scouts 7:30 PM Band Rehearsal	12	13	14 9:00 AM Dover Mother's Assoc Pancake Breakfast 4:30 PM Pageant Rehearsal
15 Third Advent Sunday Christmas Pageant Family Promise Hosting 8:30 AM Choir 10:00 AM Worship Service 1:00 PM FP Set up 6:30 PM OWL Class 7:00 PM HSYG	16 Family Promise 1:00 PM Al Anon 7:30 PM Council Meeting	17 Family Promise 7:30 PM Deacons' Meeting	18 Family Promise 9:00 AM Al Anon 7:00 PM Boy Scouts 7:30 PM Band Rehearsal	19 Family Promise 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	20 Family Promise	21 Family Promise
22 Fourth Advent Sunday Lessons and Carols 8:30 AM Choir 10:00 AM Worship Service/ Sunday School 12:00 PM HSYG Carol-O-Grams	23 1:00 PM Al Anon	24 4:00 PM Family Service 7:00 PM Candlelight Service 11:00 PM Communion Service	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed	26	27	28
29 Worship 8:30 AM Choir 10:00 AM Worship Service	30 1:00 PM Al Anon	31	1 New Year's Day Church Office Closed.	2	3	4 3:30 PM Eagle Scout Court of Honor

(This calendar receives many updates after publication. The most up-to-date calendar is the electronic one on our website: www.thedoverchurch.org).

Advent and Christmas Services

Please join us for our Advent and Christmas Services:

- December 1st – First Advent Sunday
- December 8th – Advent Workshop
- December 15th – Christmas Pageant
- December 22nd – Lessons & Carols
- December 24th Services
 4:00 pm, Family Christmas Service
 7:00 pm, Candlelight Service
 11:00 pm, Communion Service



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