

The Dover Church

"A Welcoming Community of Faith and Service since 1762"

December 28, 2022

Volume 13, Issue 10

News from Meeting House Hill

To the gathering of Christ's disciples in Dover:

Glory to God in the highest and peace to all who know they bask in God's favor.

By the time you read these words, Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas will all be in the rearview mirror and the New Year will be upon us. For many of us, that means we are hopefully basking in the glow of church "about as good as it gets": enchanting seasonal holiday decorations, lovely music that both evokes the feel of the holiday season but also conveys the core of our faith, full pews, and familiar stories that speak to the depths of our hearts. I pray that that glow keeps your hearts and minds filled into the new year.

As Congregationalists, we also know that the New Year means Annual Meeting, that joyous time after worship on the third or fourth Sunday of January when we gather every year to discuss our budget and vote on officers and business matters. I write that "joyous" bit tongue in cheek.

To be quite frank, I have always found the core essence of congregationalism to be weak here at The Dover Church. Our way of being church is about local discernment, the gathering of these particular disciples spending the time to prayerfully consider how God in Jesus is calling us to be Christ's hands and voice in this community of Dover and beyond....and we never have enough time to do that, nor do enough of us have the patience to come to such gatherings and listen, listen to what God is saying but also what our fellow disciples are saying. We are always in a rush to get through agendas. The likelihood is that most people who receive this newsletter will not have the time or interest to read what I am writing right now.

But think about this, church is changing so rapidly that we cannot even honestly claim to be able to plan for how we will do church in five or ten years. Not honestly. We and our neighbors are massively overscheduled, which makes time for church hard to come by. That will probably continue to be so. All of us have so many opportunities for physical, emotional, relational and spiritual renewal that church is but a minor dish on the smorgasbord of life. That will also continue to be so. Covid taught us more than we know and pulled the rug out from so much we took for granted. That trend will only accelerate. Our

LOOKING AHEAD

**Church office closed
from December 24 to
January 2**

**Conversation about CE
Sunday, January 8
following worship**

**Prayer Chapel on
Monday, Wednesday
And Friday at 12:30 PM**

**DovaYoga
Tuesdays and Thursdays
at 8:30 AM**

**Sanctuary Choir continues
January 9 at 6:30 PM**

**Chapel Bell Choir
continues January 10
at 6:00 PM**

**Women's Spiritual Friendship
Group meets
January 18 at 9:15 AM**

**Men's Breakfast Group
Friday, January 20
at 8:00 AM,**

**Annual Meeting
following worship
January 29, 2023**

See inside calendar for more details.

THE DOVER CHURCH • P.O. Box 305, Dover, MA 02030 • Tel/fax: 508-785-0957

admin@thedoverchurch.org • www.thedoverchurch.org

the Rev'd Dr. C. Maxwell Olmstead, Senior Pastor • max@thedoverchurch.org

the Rev'd Kayla McKinsey, Associate Pastor • kayla@thedoverchurch.org

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town is changing before our eyes, with fewer and fewer people engaged in community functions like church. Folks live here for shorter periods of time and do not seek to make lifelong friendships...at least that's how it seems to me when I think back to the community of my youth in which church membership meant decades if not life.

I am not complaining, bemoaning our lot, or throwing up my hands in resignation. Our church is doing alright and has many of the pieces in place to do even better. But I cannot claim to know the answers to the questions that are before us:

- How are we called to be community in a community where community is not a priority?
- How are we called to help people form significant friendships/relationships when most people are relational tumbleweeds?
- How are we called to do worship? We do our traditional worship really well (imho), but are we using the best media for reaching younger adults, teens, children?
- We are serving the world, but how do we find ways for everyone to feel the glow of serving others?
- It takes so many people to staff our committees and many people come to church these days to receive spiritual nurture rather than to serve an institution, is it time to reorganize our model?

The list goes on. Just sharing some thoughts on the mind of your senior pastor as we come to another Annual Meeting which will probably be as rushed as the last thirteen have been since I arrived in 2009.

In the meantime, our life of worship and prayer, fellowship and service, of friendships over the years, rolls on as it has for 260 years here. Maybe I should just put these thoughts out of my mind, but as a Protestant at heart I believe that God is always speaking a new word for each new genera-

tion to live our faith in Christ in new ways, and I feel that the generations are changing.

At least we don't have Tom Brady blowing up so many of our Sunday events with important and enjoyable football games to watch anymore!

In faith, hope, and love,

Max

By the grace of our Lord, (one of) your pastor(s)

A Conversation about CE

A Conversation about Christian Education with Your Pastors – January 8 after Worship

One of the big questions following Covid that we (your pastors) had was "will they come back?" We wondered whether the older folks would come back up the walkway or remain at home on YouTube. We wondered whether all the folks who had joined us via YouTube would ever come in person at all. And finally, we wondered if families with Sunday School aged children would come back; whether they might have gotten out of the habit of Sunday morning church after so long away and found other ways to enjoy their weekends.

In short, we have been delighted to see so many young children at church this Fall, but we also realize that the challenges our traditional Sunday School model faced before Covid (two working families with little time to volunteer teach, parents' spiritual need to be in worship and not in the classroom; Sunday morning sports and other activities, vacation homes, etc.) have been exacerbated by Covid and life has changed yet again.

Kayla and I would like to sit down after worship on January 8 to listen to where the Sunday School families are at. We want to know what you think about kids in worship vs. kids over in the Sunday School, the balance of sitting at a table instruction vs. kinetic learning, the tension between being a relaxed church where people come when they feel so moved and the need to have a fully staffed and curriculum full Sunday School ready to go every Sunday just in case everyone shows up.

At the heart of our Congregational tradition of doing church is not democracy or votes or voices, but discernment, and discernment is an exercise in listening and hearing how God is speaking. We could just mandate a program or allow a committee to run around throwing spaghetti at the wall and see what sticks, but that's not how our tradition

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works. Having said that, it's up to you to show up so we can hear what you have to say and you can hear what others have to say. We hope January 8 should be a good Sunday for everyone except the hardcore skiers. We hope and pray you can all make the effort to join us. We will arrange for extended nursery and childcare so that you can talk and listen without having to worry about your kids.

If you know that you cannot make it but want to be heard, or if you have any preliminary questions or comments you know who to write to @thedoverchurch.org, or give us a call at 785-0957.

Max & Kayla

Faith Formation & Spiritual Growth

Prayer Chapel

Meets on zoom - on **Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 12:30 to 1:00PM**. It's a time to check in with church family, share joys and sorrows, and be in prayer together. Please reach out to either Max or Kayla if you have any questions.

DovaYoga (with Max)

Tuesdays and Thursdays - 8:30-9:30AM

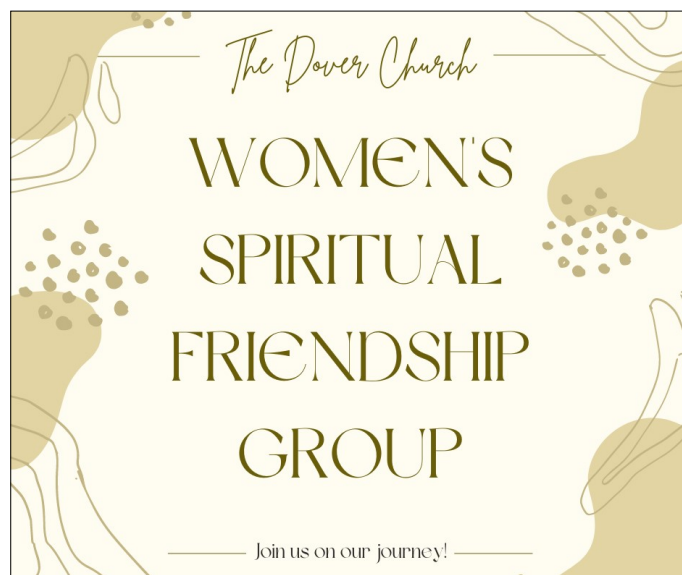
Right at the church in Kraft Hall - YOGA! FREE YOGA! Moderate yoga with an emphasis on individual exploration rather than a bunch of people trying to outdo each other as contortionists.

Women's Spiritual Friendship Group:

On **January 18th** our Women's Spiritual Friendship group will meet at **9:15AM** (social time starting at 9) to continue our discussions about women in the Bible. This meeting will be part two of our study of Mary Magdalene. Last meeting, we focused on the role of Mary Magdalene in the Gospels, her abiding presence amidst the horror of the crucifixion, her courage in showing up to the tomb on Easter morning, and her role as a primary witness to the resurrection.

This month we'll shift focus and read through an early Christian text that didn't become part of the established Biblical canon - The Gospel of Mary. We'll discuss together what this fragmentary text, which was widely circulated and read among the earliest of Christians, can tell us about

Mary's role among Jesus' first followers, and about the role of women more broadly in the early church. We hope you will join us!



From our Assistant Treasurer

Time is Running Out!

If you have not completed your 2022 pledge payments, please take a minute to do so now. Nancy will be in the office between Christmas and New Year's processing the final receipts for 2022. Final payments can be made online up until 11:59pm on 12/31/2022 or can be made by check if the check is dated 12/31/2022 or earlier.

Nancy will be closing the 2022 books on Friday, January 6, 2023, and can receive 2022 checks up until that day. If you have questions, please reach out to Nancy at 508-785-0957 or via email at Nancy@TheDoverChurch.org.

Music News

January Sanctuary Choir

Sanctuary Choir resumes Sunday, January 8 at 9 AM. Monday rehearsals resume Monday, January 9 at 6:30 PM. All are welcome



January Chapel Bell Choir

All who are interested in joining the next session of Chapel Bell Choir are welcome. Registration open until January 1. Please let Christine know by January 1 if you wish to participate so we can reserve a place for you. Rehearsals resume Tuesday, January 10 at 6 PM.



Youth Programming

Children's Church in Sunday School January 8th



In 2023, we will be trying a new thing in our Sunday School program - Children's Church. This used to be a beloved tradition at TDC where, once a month, the children would lead a worship service for

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themselves during Sunday School time. We will be dipping our toes back into that practice, beginning on **January 8th**.

This worship service will be interactive, exuberant, silly, and also reverent. It is our hope that these services will introduce children to some of the elements of a worship service in a way that is fun and accessible and will be an opportunity for meaningful spiritual connection and formation. We'll pray, we'll sing songs with movements, we'll act out Scripture stories, we'll reflect on how they resonate with us, and we'll share communion together.

If you would like to learn more or lend a hand, please reach out to Kayla!



Communion Class for 2nd to 4th Graders

We are offering a communion class in the spring of 2023! Our communion class will meet on Sunday from 5-6:30 during Lent (2.26, 3.5, 3.12, 3.19, 3.26). We'll learn through games and hands-on activities. While children will still be welcome at the communion table before/without completing this course, we hope that this course will deepen and enrich the communion experience, as well as strengthen connections between our children and their church peers, their church community, and their faith!

We also hope this class provides a faith formation opportunity for families for whom Sunday School is difficult to attend due to other commitments. The experience will culminate on Palm Sunday, April 2nd. As part of the service (already a fun one with a palm parade!) we will celebrate the class by inviting them forward at communion time to recognize their learning and their role in our congregation. Family and friends are encouraged to be there!

Sunday School Schedule

January

- 1st: New Year's Day, No Sunday School, TBR Open
- 8th: Children's Church, Baptism of our Lord
- 15th: MLK Weekend, No Sunday School, TBR Open
- 22nd: TS
- 29th: TS



High School Youth Group Schedule

Here is our upcoming HSYG schedule:

January

- 1: NO HSYG, New Years
- 7: Cradles to Crayons Giving Factory, 10am-12pm (donations welcome)
- 8: No HSYG, Cradles to Crayons
- 15: NO HSYG, MLK
- 22: MATE NIGHT
- 29: Game Night - Among Us & Snacks



Middle School Youth Group

Our first four months with a combined Middle School Youth Group (Dover Church and Pilgrim Church) have been lots of fun and a time for fellowship, faith and serving others in the world. We go into 2023 read to do even more! Our Sunday, January 8th meeting will be a game night — lots of different

things to do and fun too. January 22 will be a service project, specifics yet to be determined.

Note: meetings will now begin at **5 pm** on Sundays and run until 6:30. (Pastor John is teaching confirmation in the winter and spring on Sunday nights.) See you all in the new year!

--Pastor John Hudson

MSYG Dates/Times January 2023

- 8: at 5:00 PM at Pilgrim Church
- 22: at 5:00 PM at Pilgrim Church



HSYG MATE Schedule 2022-2023

As of December 18, we have reached our capacity for our MATE 2023 trip. We will only be able to accept more students if we are able to arrange for more adult volunteers than we've had in the past.

Because we're beginning the wait list, we are asking everyone who is already signed up to register (TWO online forms) and pay the \$250 deposit paid by January 15th. That helps us get firm commitments so we can best manage the waitlist and begin to assemble teams.

Please read the below the scheduled prep meetings leading up to the 2023 MATE trip. We may add one more meeting in 2023, tbd. We may also organize team fundraising opportunities (like car washes), those dates are yet to be determined as well. To be eligible for all 40 hours of community service, students must attend at least 5 preparatory events - be they meetings, group fundraising events, or individual or small group time helping Kayla & Max with trip-related tasks. Please join us on:

- January 22nd, 7-8:30pm
- March 19th, 7-8:30pm
- April 30th, 7-8:30pm
- June 4th, 7-8:30pm
- MATE TRIP: June 24th-July 1st



Mission In Action: Serving Others

Cradles 2 Crayons Donations

Don't forget to bring your donation boxes to the church by Friday, January 6th. Our High School Youth Group will be taking all donations to C2C on the 7th. Thank you!

Family Promise Hosting Week

We will be supporting the Family Promise guests the week of **January 29th**. We will be looking for dinner chefs (1-2 per night), dinner hosts (2 per night), and grocery shoppers. Please let Peggy Cross, peggyfcross@gmail.com, know if you are interested in helping out. Watch for the sign up coming soon!

Fellowship Opportunities

Men's Breakfast Group

Will meet on Friday, **January 20th** at **8:00AM** in Kraft Hall for breakfast.



Tea and Check In:

3 pm on Thursdays. This is a fun way to check in with your fellow members. Come relax, have a cup of tea and cookies and bring your parish news.

We meet in the church library. All are welcome to join us.



Friday Morning Walking Group:

Our Friday morning walking group is going to take a break for January and February. We will see who is interested in walking starting in March. If you would like to get involved in our walking ministry, please speak with Beth Benjamin, beth@thedoverchurch.org.



We wish all of our members, friends and family a very joyous, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
(This calendar receives many updates after publication. The most up-to-date calendar is the electronic one on our website: www.thedoverchurch.org).						
1 Epiphany Sunday New Year's Day 10:00 AM Worship In-Person & Virtual	2	3 8:30 AM DovaYoga	4 12:30 PM Prayer Group	5 8:30 AM DovaYoga 3:00 PM Tea and Check In	6 12:30 PM Prayer Group	7 10:00 AM HSYG Cradles To Crayons
8 Baptism of Jesus 10:00 AM Worship In-Person & Virtual 11:30 AM Deacons 3:00 PM Boy Scout COH 5:15 PM MSYG	9 12:30 PM Prayer Group 6:30 PM Sanctuary Choir	10 8:30 AM DovaYoga 11:00 AM COA Lunch 6:00 PM Chapel Bell Choir	11 12:30 PM Prayer Group 7:00 PM Finance Committee	12 8:30 AM DovaYoga 3:00 PM Tea and Check In	13 12:30 PM Prayer Group	14
15 10:00 AM Worship In-Person & Virtual 11:30 AM Music Committee	16 MLK, Jr. Day	17 8:30 AM DovaYoga 6:00 PM Chapel Bell Choir 7:30 PM Church Council	18 9:00 PM Women's Group 12:30 PM Prayer Group	19 8:30 AM DovaYoga 3:00 PM Tea and Check In	20 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast Group 12:30 PM Prayer Group	21
22 10:00 AM Worship In-Person & Virtual 1:00 PM Fox Hill Village 5:15 PM MSYG 7:00 PM HSYG (MATE)	23 12:30 PM Prayer Group 6:30 PM Sanctuary Choir	24 8:30 AM DovaYoga 6:00 PM Chapel Bell Choir	25 12:30 PM Prayer Group	26 8:30 AM DovaYoga 3:00 PM Tea and Check In	27 12:30 PM Prayer Group	28
29 Annual Meeting Sunday 10:00 AM Worship In-Person & Virtual 11:00 AM Annual Meeting 7:00 PM HSYG	30 Family 12:30 PM Prayer Group 6:30 PM Sanctuary Choir	31 Promise 8:30 AM DovaYoga 6:00 PM Chapel Bell Choir	February 1 Hosting 12:30 PM Prayer Group	2 Week 8:30 AM DovaYoga 3:00 PM Tea and Check In	3 12:30 PM Prayer Group	4 11:00 AM Memorial Service



The Annual Meeting of The Dover Church will be held on **Sunday, January 29, 2023**, directly following worship. Watch for the warrant, which will be posted shortly.

THE DOVER CHURCH

P.O. Box 305 • Dover, MA 02030 • Tel: 508-785-0957 • Fax: 508-785-0957 • info@thedoverchurch.org

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