

The Dover Church

"A Welcoming Community of Faith and Service since 1762"

March 1, 2025

Volume 16, Issue 3

News from Meeting House Hill

To the church of Christ's disciples in Dover:

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Creator and Christ Jesus our Lord!

We have a lot of customs, traditions, rituals and other assorted oddities in the church which have accrued over the years. In my time as a pastor, I have spent a fair amount of time considering which of these still serve a purpose and which get in the way of our faith walk as a congregation. One in particular is on my mind today: the monthly newsletter reflection from the pastor. It's not that I mind reflecting or that I think my reflections serve no purpose in helping draw the congregation together around one thought, challenge, or moment. It's that I don't think the congregation reads the newsletter anymore. With so much out there to read in the world, what Olmstead has to say pales in comparison.

Nonetheless, I do have something to say. Even if 95% of you do not read this, it will at least be in the historical record to reflect back: "Wow! Olmstead said that back then!" (If you're really clever, you can see how I wrote that in such way that it could be read as a statement of disbelief at my stupidity or amazement at my foresight. Time will tell.) The other evening as our family sat down to supper, one of our sons turned to me and said, "I wonder what historians are going to call the time we are living in when they write history books in 50 years, Dad. You know, like Reconstruction, The Robber Barons, The New Deal, etc."

I was pleased that my teenager was applying his education and could see what I was seeing, that we are in a new time. I responded, "Yes. I wonder too. The great thing about being an American is that we can all help shape our time for the future to look back on."

Mr. Trump had not been President more than a few days when the first member of the church came into my office: "you were a lot more radically outspoken when Biden was President, Max. We've got to do something, and you're supposed to lead us."

On another day that week, another member came into church dressed up in red, white and blue, with a big smile and said as he shook my hand, "isn't this a great time for America?"

LOOKING AHEAD

**Fat Sunday Service, March 2,
10 AM Worship followed by
Pancake breakfast**

**Bus from Fox Hill Village
Sunday, March 2nd**

**Communion Class
March 9, 16, 23, 30 and April 6
5:30 PM – 6:30 PM**

**Prayer Chapel
Wednesdays 12:30 – 1 PM on Zoom
Zoom in website calendar**

**Family Playgroup
Thursdays 8:30 AM – 10 AM**

**Saging
March 16th 11:30 AM-12:30 PM**

**Wonder Wednesdays
3/5, 3/12, 4/2, and 5/7
11:45 AM – 2:15 PM**

**Women's Spiritual
Friendship Group
Wednesday, March 5, 9:15 AM**

**Worship at Fox Hill Village
Sunday, March 23, 1 PM**

**Men's Spiritual
Friendship Group
Friday, March 28 at 7:00 AM**

**The best way to reach Max is to call
his cell phone, 508-982-0422.**

Kayla: 508-269-8406

See inside calendar for more details.

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

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

An Open and Affirming Congregation in the United Church of Christ.



And then, yet another member expressed her disappointment in me that I didn't feel that I could post as church policy a condemnation statement about an executive order that is particularly antithetical to our Christian faith and the Biblical witness of the people of Israel, that for the church to speak it would require a meeting and a vote. A new time. People are on edge in all kinds of directions. As the pastor, I am called to lead, as the member above pointed out to me. So, I wanted to tell you what I plan to do.

First, I plan to continue trying to uphold the promise I made when I covenanted to be your pastor all these years ago: to shepherd the congregation, the whole congregation. Not just a few people with whom I happen to share similar political views.

Second, the primary task of the pastor is to help all of us to live out Jesus' great commandment to the church: "that we should love each other." And now, at this time when we sincerely despise the social, political and economic thoughts each other are thinking, we have a unique opportunity to take it one step further and learn "to love our enemies." They are sitting right beside us in prayer. We don't have to drive to another town or another state.

Third, I am going to be Biblical. The great danger that churches on the left and right face is a desire to rage incessantly about their opponents. Going to one of these churches is like eating at a smorgasbord where the menu is "catastrophe du jour." That's fine if you're preaching to the choir, as it were. But it is also just a lot more noise for everyone else who wants to hear some Good News on a Sunday morning. Rather than cherry picking

the weekly news for what MAGA is doing or what the Left wishes it was doing, I plan to open up the Bible and try to hear what the Prophets of Israel, the Apostles and our Lord Jesus are saying to us. I am pretty certain it is going to make most, if not all of us, uneasy, at least from time to time. Which is why we always need to be reminded that God loves us and will never forsake us. I can assure you; this will leave us plenty to talk about and more than we can possibly ever do. I am asking you join me in putting your identity as Christ's disciple above that as Republican or Democrat.

Fourth, I have every intention of continuing The Dover Church's ministry as a public witness of our tradition's understanding of God's love. We will continue to let passersby know that God loves everyone, EVERYONE, which includes LGBTQ folks, and that they are safe here, that we are NOT THOSE KINDS OF CHRISTIANS. We will continue to do what we can to help the homeless and hungry and outcast, even if that's not "the thing to do" right now. In fact, as we are so prosperous right now, I am going to encourage us to think much bigger than we have in the past about what we actually might do. And we will continue to help the refugees we have welcomed to our country find their way into our common life.

Fifth, I will encourage everyone to be sensitive to how the person you are walking up to might be feeling about our country and our politics. In other words, try not to walk on each other's toes. There will be plenty of opportunities to have robust and thoughtful conversation, but maybe coffee hour or one of our fellowship groups is not the forum for walking up boldly and opening with, "Isn't Trump (fill in the blank, based upon your particular enthusiasm)?" Remember, we are in a time where we do not agree on "the facts." We are getting our "news" from very different outlets than when our parents had three channels to choose from. In other words, we may be completely unaware of what someone else thinks is true and real.

And finally, although I always say finally and don't really mean it, for my purposes here, finally, I am going to encourage us to see our time as one of opportunity. Think about it this way: in a time when churches just like ours are falling apart, spiraling downward in loss of membership and the ability to stop that spiral, our church is growing and has every prospect of continuing if not accelerating that growth as other local churches decline; our finances are solid and have every prospect of getting

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even better; our staff is really top notch and make coming to The Dover Church a “worthwhile experience,” and on and on and on. Rather than throw up our hands in despair or fear, let us step boldly forward in hope and confidence and see what God has in store for us.

Like I said, few may read these words, but there they are in case anyone wonders in the months or years ahead why “he just kept doing what he was doing.”

In faith, hope and love,
Max
By the grace of our Lord,
(One of) your pastor(s)

Upcoming Worship Services

We hope you will join us this month for worship on Sundays at 10:00 AM.

If you cannot join us in person, we hope you will join us virtually. You can access our YouTube link, worship bulletin, and music on our website:

<https://thedoverchurch.org/worship/online/>

Fat Sunday

Join us on Sunday, March 2nd, at 10 AM for our Fat Sunday worship Service. Following worship, we hope you will join us for a pancake breakfast in Kraft Hall. One last indulgence before Lent begins on Wednesday, March 5th.

Monthly Worship Services at Fox Hill Village

This month, we will have a bus that will bring our Fox Hill Village congregants to The Dover Church on, **Sunday, March 2nd**. Check with the front desk for departure time. All are invited to stay for the Pancake breakfast after worship.

Max, Kayla and Dan will also be offering a traditional Protestant worship service at Fox Hill Village on **Sunday, March 23, 2025 at 1:00 PM**. If you live at Fox Hill Village, we hope you will join them. Ask at the front desk for meeting location.

Stewardship Update

As Spring begins to make itself known, the 2025 Stewardship train continues to chug along. Over the next few weeks, the stewardship committee will be connecting with the thirty families who participated in last year’s stewardship

campaign but have not yet climbed on board for this year. These families will be instrumental in securing the remaining \$53,000 needed to bring the 2025 stewardship campaign to a successful close.

If you have not yet pledged and would like to support the church in this critical way, there are several options to help you do so.

You may submit your pledge by completing the pledge card mailed to you in November, completing a pledge card from the pews and adding it to the collection plate on an upcoming Sunday morning, sending an email to our assistant treasurer at nancy@thedoverchurch.org, making an online pledge at www.thedoverchurch.org/giving/, or by following this link to our website pledge page: <https://tinyurl.com/TDC2025Stewardship>. Spring Blessings to all!

Faith Formation & Spiritual Growth

MEN'S SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Men’s Spiritual Friendship Group

March 28th, 2025 at 7:AM

In March, we’ll have the third meeting of the Men’s Spiritual Friendship Group. This is a more structured men’s fellowship that actively tries to involve men who are newer to our congregation. The great joy of a church like ours is that people connect with others outside their age group or friend group.

In February, we discussed a short chapter from a book Max has been writing about practicing Jesus.

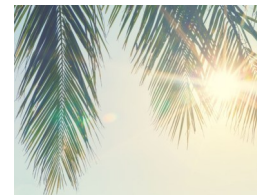
We use a texting platform to easily reach out to the men in our congregation. If you have not received a text from The Dover Church inviting you to join the Men’s Spiritual Friendship Group, please let our DCL, Ana, know: ana@thedoverchurch.org.

Our next meeting will be on **March 28, 2025 at 7:AM**. We hope you can join us.

Saging

March 16th from 11:30 AM-12:30 PM

The purpose of this group is to help those who at-

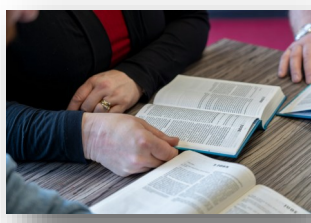


tend to get in touch through various time-tested practices from various faith traditions. Our Saging group will gather on **Sunday, March 16th from 11:30 AM-12:30 PM**. We will meet in the Church Library.



Prayer Chapel

Looking for a way to connect with new and old friends? Wanting to build some time for your spirit into your daily routine? There are so many reasons to take part in TDC's zoom prayer chapel, which will continue meeting on zoom on **Wednesdays 12:30 to 1:00 PM**. Take time to check in with church family, share joys and sorrows, and be in prayer together. You can find the zoom link on the website public calendar. Please reach out to Max or Kayla if you have any questions.



Women's Spiritual Friendship Group: Wednesday, March 5th at 9:15 AM

Our Women's Spiritual Friendship Group will be leading worship on March 16th, exploring the story of Ruth and what her remarkable journey can teach us about loving God and neighbor along our own journeys. This will be the third year that our women's group has led a service in March, in honor of International Women's Day. It is always a joy for the group to share a taste of the learning we have done over the past year.

Youth Programming

Join us for Worship on **Sunday, March 2nd** at 10am to celebrate **Fat Sunday** during our **All Ages service with Dixieland music!**



We will not have Sunday School, but we have changed the order of worship to add movement, eliminate silence and make it shorter and more child friendly. The Teddy Bear Room will be open for our littlest worshipers. And don't forget we have **pancakes and fellowship** following service!

Communion class

Around ages 8 or 9, children begin to develop a more independent faith and intellect, a shift recognized by many religious and secular traditions. For example, some Christian denominations wait until this age to baptize children, and Catholic children take a special course before receiving communion. Our communion class aims to honor this growing faith by helping children understand communion more deeply and celebrate this transition.



The class will meet Sundays from 5:30 -6:30 during Lent (3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, and 4/6), using games and hands-on activities like Bible stories, crafts, and making bread and grape juice. While children are always welcome at the communion table, we hope this class will enrich their experience, deepen their faith, and connect them with peers and the church community. The class will culminate on Palm Sunday, April 13th, with a celebration during the service. Family and friends are encouraged to attend! Sign up here: <https://tinyurl.com/2025Communion> Feel free to reach out to Kayla with any questions!

Wonder Wednesdays

March 5th and 12th, 11:45 AM – 2:15 PM

This semester we are exploring God's creation, focusing on the wonder and abundance of the watery corners of creation - oceans, lakes, rivers, and streams. If you know of a K-5 student at Chickering or Pine Hill, spread the word! Registration is still open.



We are looking forward to gathering again on March 5th and then just a week later on March 12th.

Wonder Wednesdays, which runs from 11:45-2:15, is a faith formation experience focused on the goodness of creation, the call to serve, and the never-ending love God has for each of us. Each day we'll explore Bible stories, play games, get crafty and creative, and run around outside. Contact Kayla or Martha for more information.



Sunday School for March 2025

Each Sunday children will remain in worship until the children's message and then head to Sunday School class with their teachers. On long weekends, when there is no Sunday School, the Teddy Bear room will be open.

Register for Sunday School on our website:

<https://thedoverchurch.org/children-youth/sunday-school/>

Looking ahead in March:

2nd - Fat Sunday - No Sunday School - Worship Service for All Ages
 9th - Ash Sunday - The Ten Lepers
 16th - A Blind Man is Healed
 23rd - The Last Supper
 30th - In the Garden

Childcare is available every Sunday starting at 9:40 AM and is available during our 10 AM service for 0 through 3-year-olds.

Future Middle School Youth Group Dates

Pilgrim & Dover Churches
MSYG
 Middle School Youth Group
 Winter/Spring Schedule

March 9	Movie Night & Popcorn
March 23	Serving @ New Life Furniture Bank
April 6	Easter Baskets for the Elderly
April 27	Earth Day Clean Up
May 4	Service Project TBA
May 18	Year End Celebration
June 1	Bowling

Register & Learn More
www.pilgrimsherborn.org
 25 South Main St.
 Sherborn, MA

High School Youth Group Dates

Look ahead at everything in store for the High School Youth Group these next couple of months. All teens grades 8-12 are welcome! Contact Kayla for more information.

March

- 2: Mardi Gras Murder Mystery!
- 9: Summer Youth Pilgrimage Prep Meeting
- **14: Friday Night meeting (DS School Play)**
- **16: NO HSYG, Friday Night Meeting**
- 23: Seed Starting & S'mores
- 30: Intergenerational Dinner @ TDC

April

- 6: Plant Repotting
- 13: Birthday Boxes & Games
- **20: NO HSYG, Easter, April Break**
- **27: NO HSYG, April Break**

Candles for our Teen Pilgrims

Our High School Youth Group has crafted some beautiful candles, using dried flowers, that are for sale in support of our teen pilgrimage this coming summer. You can see the candles for sale in coffee hour or by stopping by the church office during the week.

Suggested donations are \$5 + per taper candle, \$10 + for a 3 inch pillar candle or \$15+ for a 6 inch pillar candle. All proceeds will mitigate the costs for our teens traveling to the Taizé monastery. Thank you for your support!!



Tents for Taizé

We need your help in securing tents for our Youth Group Pilgrimage to Taizé, France this summer. We are specifically looking for:

- *3-4 multi-person tents
- *3 double sleeping tents

If you have any tents that you can lend us from June 20th-July 10th, or if you know of someone who might, please let us know!

Thank you for supporting our youth on this journey!



Family Playgroup

The TDC Family Playgroup meets in the music room on Thursday mornings, 8:30-10am. We provide toys, snacks, and climbing structures for babies and toddlers and an opportunity for caregivers to connect. The group is **free, no RSVP or registration required. All are welcome! Spread the word!**



Vacation Bible School (VBS)

Save the Date: August 4 – August 8, 2025

It's time to hit the trail... for adventure! This August we invite you to join us for True North VBS!

You can expect a week of epic adventures filled with awesome Bible-learning experiences kids will see, hear and touch, hands-on science experiments, team building games, unforgettable Bible songs, and tasty treats! Get Ready for the summer event that points kids to Jesus, a faithful friend we can always trust in a wild world!



Mission In Action: Serving Others

Family Promise Metrowest - Shelter Program Hosting

Week March 16 - 20

The Mission in Action Committee is seeking volunteers to assist with our upcoming 3/16-20 hosting week at Family Promise's day center in Natick. Please contact Peggy Cross at peggyfcross@gmail.com if you'd like to help with purchasing and delivering groceries or providing dinner on Tuesday March 18 or Thursday March 20.

Fellowship Opportunities

Tea and Check-in 3:00 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.



Church Potluck

Saturday, March 15, 2025 5 PM – 7 PM

We have repurposed the date originally planned for our Safari Supper! We are excited to invite you to a fun-filled Church Potluck in Kraft Hall on Saturday, March 15th, 5:00-7:00 PM. Enjoy fellowship, food, and fun as we gather for a special evening!

We will be happy to organize a ride if you need one. Don't let driving be an obstacle to joining in the fun!

Childcare will be available.

Scan the QR code to let us know if you're coming and if you are able, sign up to bring some food to share, and/or to help with set-up or clean up. Feel free to reach out to Ana with any questions:

ana@thedoverchurch.org.

This should be a fun evening of fellowship, food and fun!



March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>(This calendar receives many updates after publication. The most up-to-date calendar is the electronic one on our website: www.thedoverchurch.org/calendar.)</i></p>						<p>1 UN Zero Discrimination Day</p> 
<p>2 9:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM Worship In-Person & Virtual Bus from Fox Hill Village 11AM Pancake Breakfast 7:00 PM HSYG</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 Mardi Gras 9:00 AM Fox Hill Garden Club 7:00 PM Deacon's Meeting</p>	<p>5 Ash Wednesday 9:15 AM Women's Group 11:45 AM Wonder Wednesdays 12:30 PM Prayer Chapel (Zoom) 7:15 PM BSA</p>	<p>6 8:30 AM Family Playgroup 3:00 PM Tea and Check In</p>	<p>7 2:30 PM Daisy 77223</p> <p>Admin wing closed due to insulation project</p>	<p>8 International Women's Day</p> 
<p>9 9:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM Worship In-Person & Virtual 5:00 PM MSYG 5:30 PM Communion Class 7:00 PM HSYG</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11 9:00 AM NNS Program 7:30 PM Finance Committee Meeting</p>	<p>12 11:45 AM Wonder Wednesdays 12:30 PM Prayer Chapel 7:15 PM BSA Troop 1</p>	<p>13 8:30 AM Family Playgroup 3:00 PM Tea and Check In</p>	<p>14 7:00 PM HSYG</p>	<p>15 5:00 PM Church Potluck</p> 
<p>16 9:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM Worship In-Person & Virtual 11:30 AM Saging 5:30 PM Communion Class</p>	<p>17 Family</p>	<p>18 Promise 7 PM Church Council Meeting</p>	<p>19 Hosting 12:30 PM Prayer Chapel 7:15 PM BSA Troop 1</p>	<p>20 Week 8:30 AM Family Playgroup 3:00 PM Tea and Check In</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>23 9:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM Worship In-Person & Virtual 1:00 PM @ Fox Hill Village 5:00 PM MSYG 5:30 PM Communion Class 7:00 PM HSYG</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 12:30 PM Prayer Chapel 7:15 PM BSA Troop 1</p>	<p>27 8:30 AM Family Playgroup 3:00 PM Tea and Check In</p>	<p>28 7:00 AM Men's Spiritual Friendship Group</p>	<p>29 8:30 PM Earth Hour</p> 
<p>30 9:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM Worship In-Person & Virtual 5:30 PM Communion Class 7:00 PM HSYG— Intergenerational Dinner</p>	<p>31</p>					

Join Us for a Church Potluck!

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We are excited to invite you to a fun-filled **Church Potluck** in Kraft Hall on **Saturday, March 15th, 5:00-7:00 PM**

- Enjoy fellowship, food, and fun as we gather for a special evening!
- Childcare will be available.

A Signup Genius and QR code are available to help organize the potluck.

Please sign up to bring a dish. You can also reach out to reach out to Ana to RSVP: ana@thedoverchurch.org or 508-785-0434.

We hope you will join us!



THE DOVER CHURCH

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