

The Dover Church

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY OF FAITH AND SERVICE SINCE 1762



AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION
IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday, March 30, 2025 - 10:00 AM
Fourth Sunday in Lent

The Dover Church is an Open and Affirming Congregation in the United Church of Christ, which means "no matter who you are, or where you are on your life's journey, you are welcome here." We welcome, include and celebrate people of all gender identities, family structures, faith expressions, abilities, ages, and backgrounds in worship and fellowship, to baptism, confirmation, and marriage, taking seriously the Apostle Paul's admonition to the churches in Roman: "welcome one another, just as Christ welcomed you, to the glory of God." (Romans 15:7, NRSV)

ORDER OF WORSHIP

GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

PRELUDE

Sonata V:2

Felix Mendessohn

WORDS OF WELCOME

All are invited to join in speaking or singing when bolded words appear.

If you have a prayer request card, the ushers will come by after the sermon to collect them.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 32

Pastor: Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

People: Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.

All: Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

GATHERING SONG

Rock of Ages

431

A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: God loves you and there's nothing you can do about it.
People God loves you and there's nothing you can do about it.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

EXCHANGING SIGNS OF PEACE

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

CHILDREN MAY LEAVE FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL

SONG

This Is the Day

257 vs. 1

GOD'S WORD FOR US

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

O Lord our God, you offer us in scripture words of life, which, through faith, become our word of life. Help us to listen for that word in our lessons this morning. Amen

from the APOSTOLIC LETTERS

2 Corinthians 5: 16-21

from the GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Reader: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

ACT OF PRAISE

**O bless the Lord, my Soul!
 God's grace to thee proclaim.
 And all that is within me join
 To bless God's holy name. Amen.**

SERMON

"Coming Home"

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE

OFFERING OURSELVES TO THE SPIRIT & THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

If Ye Love Me

Thomas Tallis

DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
 Praise God, all creatures here below;
 Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Lord be with you.
And also with you

SUNG PRAYER

O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. When I call, answer me.
 O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
 thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread;
 and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
 and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN OF PARTING **Praise the Lord, Ye Heavens Adore Him** S7

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Pastorale JS Bach

THE FLOWERS ARE GIVEN IN LOVING MEMORY OF
ALICE, HAMILTON, ALLIE, CAROL, HAP AND GEORGE HACKNEY
 BY HAM HACKNEY

LAY LEADERS IN TODAY'S SERVICE
 DEACON ON DUTY: David Mahr
 USHERS: Ham Hackney
 LITURGIST: Ham Hackney
 SCRIPTURE READER: Daniel Swayne-Gerrish

*Please join us for fellowship and refreshment in Kraft Hall
following this morning's worship service.*

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Birthdays and Anniversaries

We wish Happy Birthday to the following people: **Sabrina Hussar, Kenny Gemelli, Daniel Swayne-Gerrish, Newton Thompson, Ricky Cullen, Kip Melville, Amaia Willems and Ed Dennison**

Birthday wishes are for March 30, 2025 to April 5, 2025. Please let us know if we have forgotten anyone!

Announcements

Interested in Joining The Dover Church?

One of our great joys here at The Dover Church is welcoming new people into our faith and fellowship, because we believe that every new person is a gift from God. With every new person who comes to be with us, God is doing a new thing. For that, we rejoice.

If you're interested in joining The Dover Church or finding out what this is all about, Max or Kayla would love to talk with you. We are receiving new members into the church on **Mother's Day, May 11th**, in worship.

We will be celebrating our new members – those who have recently joined, as well as those who are about to join, along with our volunteer leaders. We warmly invite you to join us at the parsonage for an evening of food and fellowship with The Dover Church on **Friday, May 9th, from 5:00-8:00 PM**.

Easter Flowers

Would you like to honor a beloved friend, parent, or child in a special way? Have you ever wanted to thank God for hope and faith and life itself? A beautiful plant in church on Easter morning can make just such a statement – as well as bring beauty to our Meetinghouse.

As in past years, we will be offering Lilies, Daffodils and Tulip plants for Easter. These beautiful plants will grace our sanctuary on Easter Sunday. If you would like to order Easter plants, please check the eNews to order online or complete a paper form found in the church pews and the church office.

You can pay for your online order either through our website or by mailing a check to the church office.

We would appreciate receiving all orders by **Friday, April 11**.

Join us for our Easter Brunch and Egg Hunt

We will have a robust coffee hour on **Easter Sunday April 20th**, between the 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM services. No matter which service you will be attending, we hope you will join us in Kraft Hall for coffee hour.

We will be holding our Easter Egg Hunt in Taylor Garden directly following the 9:00 AM service. Young families, please stay for brunch after the egg hunt to enjoy food and fellowship together.

We are looking for volunteers to help provide food for this special event. Please check the eNews to see what we need and to sign up to provide something. We would appreciate having all contributions delivered to the Kraft Hall kitchen by 9:45 AM. Many thanks.

This is a joyous time for us to celebrate Christ's resurrection!

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 this summer. We are specifically looking for:

- 3-4 multi-person tents
- sleeping pads
- In addition we welcome any donations of hiking backpacks to borrow.

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!

Wonder Wednesdays

We are looking forward to gathering again on **April 2nd** when we will wade into living water with Jesus and the Woman at the Well.

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! We have some additional spots open.

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.

We are looking forward to gathering again on **May 5th** for our last session of this spring semester!

Register on our website or through the e-news. Contact Kayla or Martha for more information.

Service of Appreciation for Our Ministry with Refugees

Join us on **April 6th** for a special worship service recognizing our church's significant ministry to refugees. Over the past several years, we've supported 17 individuals, including young Afghan men who served against the Taliban and a family fleeing gang violence in Guatemala. These individuals are now building new lives in America, thanks to your help.

This service is a reminder of the urgent global need, with millions fleeing their homes today. After worship, we'll gather in Kraft Hall to assemble welcome kits for refugees from Haiti. This project is a great opportunity for families to get involved.

Please join us for this meaningful service, and invite your friends and neighbors to help make a difference.

Cornhole Tournament

Mark your calendars for **May 3rd from 3-5pm!** Our Youth Group, with help from our Christian Education Committee, is hosting a Cornhole Tournament to raise money in support of our youth pilgrims. There will be good music, yummy food, friendly competition, and cool prizes, all in support of a good cause.

You can register using the QR code below. \$30 per team of two or more.

Please reach out to Kayla if you would like to learn more about supporting this event!



True North VBS

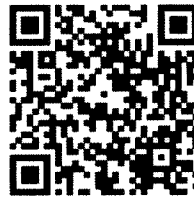
August 4, 2025-August 8, 2025

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! Please reach out to martha@thedoverchurch.org with any questions.

Register using the QR code:



Join Our Team: Volunteers Needed for True North VBS This Summer!

We're looking for passionate and dedicated volunteers to join us for our True North VBS this summer! Help make our Vacation Bible School an incredible experience for kids! Whether you have a talent for storytelling, making snacks, playing music, or organizing games, there's a place for you on our team!

Adults and youth entering Grade 7 or above are invited to volunteer.

Volunteers 18 and older must complete a CORI and Background Authorization form.

If you're ready to embark on this incredible adventure, please sign up using the QR code below. Reach out to martha@thedoverchurch.org with any questions.

Join us in pointing kids toward Jesus...their True North! We can't wait to see how God will work through you this summer!



Family Promise Metrowest – Walk to End Homelessness

The annual FPM "Walk to End Homelessness" will take place on **Sunday May 4th from 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm**, starting and ending at Natick High School. Mark your calendars for a fun-filled event including a 2.3-mile walk dedicated to raising funds and awareness about the urgent need for affordable housing for Metrowest families in need. The Dover Church will be organizing a walking team, so stay tuned for details!

Spring Bike Drive

If you have an old bicycle or two you'd like to donate to a great cause, now is your chance! The Lowell Bike Connector, in conjunction with the Dover Recycling Committee, will be holding a bike drive at the Dover Transfer Station on **Sat. May 17th**. The Mission in Action committee will be assisting with this effort by arranging to have The Dover Church parking lot as an additional designated drop-off site. The Bike Connector is a non-profit, volunteer bicycle collective that provides low cost or free recycled bicycles and parts to needy children and adults.

Prayer Chapel

Meets on zoom **Wednesday from 12:30 to 1:00 PM**. It's a time to check in with church family, share joys and sorrows, and be in prayer together. Zoom links for meetings can be found on the church's website calendar of events.

Tea and Check-In

We meet **Thursdays, at 3:00 PM** in the library. A time to check in on your friends and to hear the news of the parish. All are welcome.

Volunteer on Sunday Mornings

Are you able to help on a Sunday morning with ushering, being our liturgist, or scripture reader, or by hosting our coffee hour? To volunteer you do not need to be a member. Use the link in the e-News, sign up during coffee hour or contact the church office admin@thedoverchurch.org. Please sign up as you are able.

Dedicate Flowers on Sunday Morning

On Sundays we have a beautiful flower arrangement on the altar that is dedicated to a loved one. If you would like to dedicate flowers for Sunday morning, please speak with Betty Brady on Sunday morning to claim a date, look for the sign up sheet in Kraft Hall during coffee hour, or sign up online using the link in the e-News.

2025 Offering Envelopes Available

If you would like a boxed set of weekly offering envelopes for 2025, please let Nancy know and she will set them out for you in the narthex. Each set is numbered to make record keeping clear and convenient and to save you the time it may take to write your name and date on the general envelopes found in the pews. Nancy's email address is nancy@thedoverchurch.org, or she may be reached by phone at 508-785-0957.

The Dover Historical Society: Upcoming Exhibition

The Dover Historical Society will present the "*Amelia Peabody: Artist, Philanthropist and Visionary*" Exhibition, **April 19th through June 2025**, at the Sawin Museum and Fisher barn/Caryl farm which will explain "Who was Amelia Peabody?"

The Dover Church's bronze sculpture, "Flight to Egypt", made and donated to the church by Amelia Peabody, will feature at the exhibit.

For more information visit www.doverhistoricalsociety.org

Lenten Study Series Hosted by St. Dunstan Episcopal Church
Tuesdays, 8-9 PM on Zoom

For further information use the QR code:



A Stewardship Update

Thank you to everyone who has submitted a pledge— via the mail, email, or online— for our 2025 Stewardship campaign. As of Friday, March 28, 2025, we are \$12,264 shy of our goal. We have received 144 gifts totaling \$404,736 (97.1% of our \$417,000 goal) from:

- Caroline Abernathy
- Victoria Babcock
- Brad & Barbara Baker
- Paul & Mitsy Baranello
- Keith & Amy Barnett
- Judith Barr
- Bill Barrett
- Ben & Lana Beal
- Mark & Olivia Bedard
- Mike & Beth Benjamin
- Bob & Sandy Boynton
- Bob Brace
- Betty Brady
- Terry & Cindy Brennan
- Judith Bursiek
- Tom & Joy Bushman
- Beverly Cable
- Dale Cabot
- Walter & Dorsey Cabot
- Jim Cardell
- Matt & Alison Carothers
- Jeff & Anne Carter
- Joe & Soo Chang
- Jerry & Rui Chen
- Paul Cichocki & Cindy Ostrowski
- Pam Clayson
- Melvin & Marian Clouse
- Bob & Susan Cocks
- Ken & Ginny Colburn
- Mark & Valerie Constant
- Peggy Cross
- Barry & Anne Cullen
- Tom & Maggie Danielski
- Bob & Judy Davis
- Sarah Decker & Luis Camilo Novelo Rosas
- Scott & Leslie Decker
- Ed & Kristen Dennison
- Steve & Heather DePaola
- Margi Derian
- Tom & Carolyn Develin
- Burley & Amanda Dickerson
- Mike & Klarina Donoghue
- Darin & Christina Dougherty
- Walter & Kayla Edstrom
- Charlie & Katie Engle
- Bob & Janine Everts
- Romeo Filip & Alina Gavrila-Filip
- Edie Forrester
- Chip & Liz Gibson
- Nancy Goodall
- Bob & Lee Graham
- Scott & Kristen Griebel
- Ham Hackney
- Betty Hagan
- Bruce & Linda Hain
- Jimmy Hain
- Jon & Liz Hartnett
- Kevin & Stephanie Hedrick
- Gunnar & Vida Heskestad
- Dick Hodgson
- George & Lynne Hong
- Leah Hoover
- Gene & Mary Hornsby
- Jack & Laury Hunt
- Drew & Karen Hussar
- Glenn & Cynthia Jensen
- David Jimerson
- Chad & Lori Johnson
- Karl Johnson & Mary Yanke
- Bill & Victoria Kane
- Steve & Beth Karlson
- Mike Kendall & Alida Coo-Kendall
- George King & Diana Eng-King
- Joan King
- Jeff Knott & Katherine Dallow
- Laura Kunkemueller
- Elisha & Molly Lee
- Tom & Wendy Leeds

A Stewardship Update (*continued*)

- Sam & Val Lin
- Gerald & Whitney Loehr
- Tom & Lynn Lonabocker
- Charlie Long
- Paul & Gail Lopez
- Mike & Elizabeth Lynch
- Nancy Mackay
- David Mahr
- Russ & Ruth Mallett
- Eli & Anne Manchester
- Jim & Sara Jo Marble
- Roger & Dottie Mark
- Kyle & Heather McBurney
- Tom McElrath
- Beth McGaw
- David & Callie McOsker
- Linda Means
- Jane Moore
- Doug & CynDee Novitch
- Don & Jane Ocker
- Max Olmstead & Marie-Laure Grillet
- Bradley & Kimberly Paster
- Dave & Carol Patey
- Alexia Pearsall
- Greg & Mary Petrini
- Bob & Linda Pettit
- Craig & Jeanne Rafter
- Eric & Amanda Reinemann
- Flo Revers
- Hadley & Jeannette Reynolds
- Greg Rice
- Sue Rice
- Toni Richards
- Anne Robb
- Olga Robinson
- Doug & Darci Rogers
- Dottie Rother
- Dietrich & Liesl Schultze
- Doug & Jan Scott
- Fred & Bente Sears
- Sally Shoemaker
- John & Jody Shue
- Nancy Simms
- Dickson & Monica Smith
- Ford & Chip Spalding
- Payson & Janie Swaffield
- Daniel Swayne-Gerrish
- Connie Sweeney
- Dick & Janie Sylte
- Nancy Taber
- Nakhle & Randa Tarazi
- Ben & Kelly Taylor
- Newton & Kathy Thompson
- Lawrence Tsen
- Rein Uritam & Justine Kent-Uritam
- Jeanne Waldinger
- Trudy Walsh
- Dave & Sheryl Weden
- Ellen Weinberg
- Nevin Weinberg
- Steve & Gina White
- Gunnila Whiting
- Eli Willems
- Shirley Williams
- Eileen Wong
- June Wright

Thank you for your continued support of our church.