



# stayCONNECTED

Dover First UMC's Weekly Newsletter  
December 5, 2025

## Let's Worship Together

Sundays at 10:20 a.m.  
in the Sanctuary

## Recharge Service

Live Contemporary Music  
Last Sunday of the Month  
Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m.

## Nursery Care

Sunday mornings  
for children 1 to 3  
in rooms 1 and 3

## Preschool

Sunday mornings  
for children 4 to 6

## Children's Ministry

Kidz Min Church  
during Sunday Worship

## Youth Ministry

Youth Group for grades  
middle and high school  
Sundays at 6 p.m.

## Our Website

Visit [doverfirst.org](http://doverfirst.org)  
for online services,  
special studies,  
announcements,  
opportunities to serve,  
and the church calendar



Our annual Christmas Card Exchange Boxes  
are setup in the lobby and ready for sharing  
greetings with members of our church family.

Simply place your cards or notes under  
the correct letter of the alphabetical tabs  
and file by the recipient's last name.

Please do not leave cards to be mailed and be sure  
to check the boxes each week for your greetings.

**Special thanks to Nedra Trautman for sharing  
this fun and convenient annual tradition.**





# Church Family Christmas Breakfast

Sunday, December 21st at 9 a.m.  
in Fellowship Hall

**Please Sign Up in the Lobby**

Enjoy fellowship and a delicious breakfast  
with our church family and guests.

## Our Breakfast Menu

**\*Pancake Bar with Toppings \*Sausage  
\*Scrambled Eggs \*Hashbrown Casserole  
\*Coffee \*Hot Tea \*Milk \*Juices**

Love offering baskets will be available.



# *Second Sunday* OF ADVENT



## **Devotion for the Second Sunday of Advent**

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast,  
because they trust in you." - Isaiah 26:3

The most basic sense of the word "peace" in the Bible is to be whole or complete. Peace is a word that references building. There is a sense in which peace is taking what is broken, a relationship, a society, or even someone's life and making it whole. Peace means healing the fractures caused by our violent world. And this is the picture of Isaiah 26, God building a city, healing the destruction of this world. This city is built for those who trust God.

But trust can be difficult, especially when we experience the fractures this world brings into our lives. It can be difficult to say I am going to continue to commit to the kind of love and forgiveness that God desires. It can be hard to say I am going to offer and expect the kinds of righteousness and justice that God wants. Trusting God means truly believing that healing is coming. Trusting God is about seeing the fractures of this world and saying that God is bringing wholeness even when people seem unloving or difficult. Trusting God is about not being satisfied with the cracks in our relationships working with God for the strength to fix them.

While we constantly endeavor to bring peace into our lives and world, there is a day coming when peace will reign. Advent is about recognizing this day is coming. Advent is about recognizing there are some cracks, like those caused by death, that can only be healed by God's coming renewal. We celebrate the coming day of God's peace, where all things will be made new. We might see a number of cracks in the world right now, but we recognize where God has healed some in our lives and brought us peace, and that realization fuels our celebration of the day we know is coming.





# Welcome to Worship

## Second Sunday in Advent

### December 7, 2025

## Welcome and Announcements

Prelude                      “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”  
arr. Robert W. Thygerson

Lighting the Advent Wreath  
Dover First UMC’s *Kidz Min* Children’s Ministry

\*Hymn #2100                      Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne

Scripture                      Isaiah 11:1–10

Hymn #217                      Away in a Manger

Prayer

\*Hymn #211                      O Come, O Come, Emmanuel  
verses 1-4

Scripture                      Matthew 3:1–12

Choir Anthem                      A Voice Cries Out  
“Prepare the Way of the Lord”  
Lloyd Larson



\*Offering Introduction/Doxology/Prayer/Lord's Prayer

Message                      The Path of Peace  
                                    Pastor Wesley George

Communion

\*Hymn #218                It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

\*Benediction

\*Postlude                 "Praise the Lord, Who Reigns Above"  
                                    arr. Franklin Ritter

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**Today's Altar Flowers**

In Honor of Larry Dacio  
on His 91st Birthday  
by Zeny and Their Family

## *The Path of Peace*

### **Scripture: Matthew 3:1-12**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, <sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” <sup>3</sup> This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.’ ”

<sup>4</sup> Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup> Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, <sup>9</sup> and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>10</sup> Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

### **Questions**

1. What is the point of John’s baptism and how did it impact the Jewish community?
2. What does it mean to repent, both for John’s audience and for us today?
3. Why does John call the leaders a “brood of vipers”?

### **Background**

Related Scriptures: Isaiah 11:1–10

John’s message of repentance is based on the idea that God’s kingdom has arrived. Repentance is laying aside one’s lifestyle to live in the kingdom. That is laying down all the character traits that do not fit in the culture of God’s kingdom.

John’s baptism implies a critique of the larger Jewish culture, Jesus receiving this baptism is not about him being “cleansed from sin” as stepping through death to life in God with the people who are committed to God’s ways.

John calling the Pharisees and Sadducees a “brood of vipers” seems to reflect Jeremiah 46:22 where Egypt tries to escape the coming judgment. This would place them in the position of slaveowners, who are mistreating God’s people. The imagery may also represent the notion that vipers kill their mother, meaning these political elites are killing their mother, Israel.

When John mentions “Abraham as our ancestor” he is saying their belief is they can do what they like and they will be saved, while he is saying they need to live like that is true.

## *The Path of Peace*

### Reflection

I love Longfellow's poem *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* at first it seems like it is a sweet sentimental ode to a classic Christmas. Then in stanzas 4-6 he reflects on the deep despair of trauma, death, destruction, and war. Then in verse 7 when we think that human brokenness has triumphed over the Church's message, the bells resound even louder, "Peace on Earth". Longfellow wrote this in 1863 during the height of the Civil War as his world was thrown into turmoil with no obvious end in sight. And so, to hear him in the midst of that time recognize the drive to peace drown out the cannons of war is amazing. His optimism for peace is not a generic beauty pageant desire, instead it is clearly rooted in the Church and our ability to hear and live out the words of the angels in Luke 2:14, "Peace on Earth goodwill to men."

Even though the peace is not explicitly mentioned in Matthew 3 it is one of the major themes of Jesus' life and is certainly in the background of John's message. John's message of repentance is not simply "confessing sins", "apologizing", or "asking Jesus into your heart". Those are all great things (and should be done) but repentance is living a life that reflects the kingdom which Jesus reigns over. Baptism was and is a sign of renewal that a person has given up living in their old ways and is going to commit to living out God's plan. And peace is God's plan.

John lashes out at the ruling elite who come to where he is baptizing comparing them to vipers. His entire comment to these leaders is to associate them with destruction and to tell them they need to change. John associates the Pharisees and Sadducees with the kind of devastation that Longfellow saw in the Civil War. And this is the antithesis of God's kingdom and the way people should live. John's description of the Pharisees aligns nicely with Longfellow's comment, "hate is strong and mocks the song...". Peace is a constructive activity while hatred is a destructive activity. Peace seeks to build relationships and society, peace is about actively bringing people into closer connection and providing them with blessings. Isaiah 11 describes peace as,

"but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor  
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked." (Isaiah 11:4)

This is how Jesus saw himself, the one who is going to bring justice and righteousness—a reset of society to elevate the poor and oppressed. The Bible's idea of peace is about fixing the flaws in society so that everyone lives in God's blessing. This is exactly what makes the Bible's message of peace different and what makes it so powerful. The Romans were famous for the "Pax Romana" a "peace" founded on fear and oppression. Their peace is the kind so many in the world look for as the highest ideal, the absence of physical conflict. As we read Matthew this is what John and Jesus accuse the Jewish leaders of doing. The buy into this Roman notion of peace-- a lack of conflict—without committing to building society. John's baptism and Jesus' reign are about putting us on the path to peace. Not an absence of conflict that allows fear and oppression to govern society, but a commitment to building up society and looking out for those who are currently left out. Vipers are those who kill and destroy, repentance is a commitment to build. May you hear this call this Christmas.

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:

"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;

The Wrong shall fail,

The Right prevail,

With peace on earth, good-will to men."



# This Week at Dover First UMC



## Sunday

### Second Sunday of Advent

10:20 a.m.      Worship Service  
Communion

## Next Sunday

### Third Sunday of Advent

10:20 a.m.      Worship Service

## Monday

No Events

## Tuesday

2 p.m.

Mary Hannah  
Ladies Circle  
Lounge

7 p.m.

WMM Church  
Spanish-Speaking

7 p.m.

Boy Scouts  
Scout Room

## Wednesday

6:30 p.m.

Cub Scouts  
Education Zone

7 p.m.

Choir Rehearsal

## Thursday

1:30 p.m.

Book Club  
Multipurpose Room

7 p.m.

WMM Church  
Spanish-Speaking

## Friday

No Events

## Saturday

No Events



## Celebrating Our Savior's Birth Christmas Eve

Christmas Music Begins at 6:30 p.m.  
Service with Candlelight at 7 p.m.