



**Dover First UMC's Weekly Newsletter**  
**December 24, 2025 thru January 1, 2026**

**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



**Celebrating Our Savior's Birth**  
**Dover First United Methodist Church**

**Christmas Eve**

Special Music Begins at 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Service  
with Candlelight at 7 p.m.

**Come As You Are and Bring a Friend!**



*The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep  
darkness—  
on them light has shined.  
You have multiplied exultation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing  
plunder.  
For the yoke of their burden  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,*

*you have broken as on the day of  
Midian.  
For all the boots of the tramping  
warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.  
For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders,  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

**Isaiah 9:2-6**

God is in the business of freeing people from burdens. This is what Isaiah saw in his day, when the people of Judah were freed from the Assyrian siege. The people exulted in the birth of a new king who would lead them into a prosperous and golden age. Is it any wonder that early Christians saw in these verses a pattern that reached its fullest expression in Jesus?

God is still in the business of freeing people. And while we tend to spiritualize this idea and anticipate it as a future reward of paradise, the promise is meant for today. God wants to see us thrive and so has given us the *Wonderful Counselor* that individual who will teach us and guide out of the darkness of hatred, violence, and injustice into his reign of peace. Jesus has come to provide us lead us into the light of his love as “He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.” (Luke:152-53). Merry Christmas! The Prince who Counsels us to Peace and Justice is born!

# Celebrating Our Savior's Birth

Christmas Eve Service with Candlelight

December 24, 2025



## Brass Choir

Mitch Warden, Logan Ladrach, Ron Barkett

Tyler Bond, Natalie Bond, Nathan Bond

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

arr. Larson

"Ding Dong! Merrily on High"

"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"

"Huron Carol"

"I Saw Three Ships"

"Go Tell It on the Mountain"

arr. Henderson

## Flute

"I Wonder as I Wander"

arr. Nicole Chamberlain

Jodi Ashcraft

## Trumpet

"Carol Medley"

arr. Bill Galliford

Mitch Warden



Prelude                      “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”  
   arr. Gordon Young

Welcome and Announcements

Choral Introit      “O Little Town of Bethlehem”      verse 4

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Mike, Sara, Jameson, Kaylyn, Gretchen,  
Nattie and Emma Marlatt

Hymn #234              O Come, All Ye Faithful              verses 1-4

Scripture              Isaiah 9:2-7

Special Music      “One Small Child”  
                                 Words and Music by David Meese  
                                 Choral Setting Lloyd Larson

Scripture              Luke 2:1-8

Choir                      “Mary Did You Know?”  
                                 Choral Setting Jack Schrader

Scripture              Luke 2:9-20

Choir                      “Arise and Shine! Your Light Has Come!”  
                                 Words and arr. by Joseph M. Martin

Hymn #249              “There’s a Song in the Air”

Message              Creating a Memory  
                                 Pastor Wesley George



Offering                      “O Holy Night”  
by Adolphe Adam  
arr. Karen Smith/David Snyder  
Jodi Ashcraft, flute

Doxology

Prayer

Special Music            “Go Light Your World”  
Words and Music by Chris Rice  
Steve Dulaney

Candlelight Service

Hym #239                Silent Night, Holy Night

Extinguishing the Candles and Closing Comments

Hymn #246            Joy to the World

Benediction

Postlude                “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”  
arr. Larry Shackley



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## *Creating a Memory*

### **Scripture: Luke 2:1-20**

<sup>2</sup> In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

<sup>8</sup> Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, <sup>19</sup> and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

### **Questions**

1. What do you think is the most memorable element of this story?
2. Why is it important that Mary pondered the events of Jesus' birth?
3. What memories do you have of Christmas and how do they impact you?

### **Background**

Related Scriptures: Isaiah 9:2-6; Luke 1:46-55; Titus 2:11-14

Jesus being laid in a manger, highlights that there was no place for him among human society.

**John the Monk:** Heaven and earth are united today, for Christ is born! Today God has come upon earth, and humankind gone up to heaven. Today, for the sake of humankind, the invisible one is seen in the flesh. Therefore let us glorify him and cry aloud: glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace bestowed by your coming, Savior: glory to you!<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur A. Just, ed., *Luke*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 41.



## *Creating a Memory*

### **Reflection**

Christmas is a time for making memories. We take photos and record videos of our celebrations, preserving the moments for years to come. The trouble is those aren't real memories. Our society often talks of "making memories" but what we truly mean by that is "having experiences". Making a memory involves reflection and setting that event into the story of our life. Memories are not simply the recollection of facts we have experienced; memories are the recollection of how we experienced life. Memories include our thoughts and feelings about the past. And our memories shape who we are in the present. This is why creating memories is important, the memories are not simply echoes of past activities, they are the grounding of our present selves. Our memories tell us who we have been and help us to understand who we are now. With that in mind reflect on these two questions, what are your favorite memories of Christmas? And are your memories of Christmas good?

As you think about those questions also consider Mary, who Luke says, "and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart". Mary becomes a model for us about how Christmas can transform us. She took the experience of the birth of her son and treasured it, reflected on it, and allowed it to craft her story. Luke indicates that Mary repeatedly thought about Jesus' birth and how it impacted her thoughts and feelings. This is the premise behind the classic song "Mary Did You Know". The hymn is an invitation to let us reflect as Mary did about the birth of Jesus, to understand her thoughts and feelings, as a way to help us understand how Christmas impacts us. Singing this song is a way of crafting memories, it is about helping us find purpose in Jesus. Luke invites us to see Jesus born in the manger because there was no room in human society. Jesus—celebrated by the shepherds those on the very edge of civilization. Jesus who the angels said brings peace on earth and good will to all. Jesus who Mary sang, "he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty." Remember memories are not simply about reconstructing events, they are also about reconstructing feelings, our own experiences. So, as you reflect on these events and the experiences of those who witnessed them, think not simply about the events but how Mary Joseph, the Shepherds and even God would have felt as this story played out.

Reflecting on these elements of the Bible helps us in two ways. First it helps us understand what Christmas is supposed to mean for us. Active reflection helps us create memories that centered on the work of Jesus, that in turn work to help us find our place in this world, something that is at times difficult. The second reason that reflecting on Jesus' birth is so important is that it helps us develop the skills of reflecting on our own lives and creating our own memories. We do not often consider that we have the power to reshape our memories. This does not mean that we change the events nor how they impacted us in the moments they happened, but it does mean that we can change how they impact us today. We can change the meaning of the memories for our present behavior. Meditating on the story of Jesus' birth can help us understand where our past has fit into God's desired outcome. Meditating on Christmas helps us ask both "why" and "how" questions. Why questions express our feelings about events, how questions help us take practical steps toward becoming who we want to be. Both are important for helping us understand our past and how it is shaping our present. Whether our stories have been joyous, disheartening or even traumatic they can each find purpose in the birth of Jesus. No matter where our stories have begun this kind of reflection helps us take control of our narratives and cultivate who we are moving forward. Christmas is indeed about making memories, not simply having experiences. Let us take the time to ponder the birth of Jesus and what it means for our world, and how understanding his birth can help us make sense of our own experiences.





# Welcome to Worship

December 28, 2025

## Welcome and Announcements

Prelude "Carols of Joy and Wonder"  
Stephen Scott

## Call to Worship

L: Wonder of wonders, God has come to us!

**All: Not as a judge, but a Saviour,  
not in power, but as a servant.**

L: Wonder of wonders, God comes to us!

**All: Not in silence, but in the Word made flesh;  
not in the shadows, but bringing Light.**

L: Wonder of wonders!

**All: God is with us!**

\*Hymn #238 Angels We Have Heard on High

Scripture I Timothy 4:11–16

Hymn #219 What Child Is This

All children who would like to go to Kidz Min in the Education Zone are asked to meet at the back of the sanctuary during the hymn.

Prayer



\*Hymn #242      Love Came Down at Christmas

Scripture      Job 29:1-20

Choir Anthem      “Who Would Send a Baby”  
Words and Music by Mary Kay Beall  
Setting by John Carter

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

Baptism of Dallie Grace Reynard

Message      The Best of Both Worlds  
Rev. Doug George

\*Hymn #230      O Little Town of Bethlehem

\*Benediction

\*Postlude      “God Rest You, Merry Gentleman”  
Diane Bish

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Most of us are familiar with the life of Job. A man who had it all from a loving family to material wealth. Some believe he was the Elon Musk of his day. Most of all he was a God-fearing man. He was also the battle ground in war between the forces of righteousness and the forces of evil. Satan made the accusation the only reason humans worship the Invisible God is that God gives His people good things. God said that isn't true. We worship Him because we know He is worthy. To prove His argument God allowed Satan to attack Job and take away all the good things in his life. We have an enemy. It's Satan, not God the Father of Jesus Christ.

1. Job wanted the best of both worlds, Heaven and earth. That is natural. For many of us the best of this world was the Christmas of long ago. When the children were small, everyone was healthy and the family intact. That was Job. The problem comes when the Enemy tries to deceive us into thinking the best of this world has to do with money, power, physical lust or some other lesser possession.

(over)



2. Job suffered because he was the best God had not because of his unrighteousness. Job's three friends argued that we worship a God of credit & debit. They believed in a works-based religion where God kept an account of good and bad much like Santa Claus and sends pain and grief when we do bad and blessings when we do good. Their explanation for Job's suffering was he had sinned and was being punished. Job said that isn't God's nature. Psalm 103:12 tells us He has removed our sins away from us as far as the east is from the west. Our salvation is in the God of grace not of works.

3. Job grew during this time. He is never told why he had to suffer but he knew there is no meaningless suffering with God. There is a hidden purpose. Early in his suffering in Job 14:14 he questions if there is life or purpose after the grave but later in his suffering in Job 19:25 he cried out that he knows his Redeemer lives. This is a foreshadowing of John 11 when Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life".



# This Week at Dover First UMC



## Sunday

10:20 a.m.      Worship Service

## Next Sunday

10:20 a.m.      Worship Service  
Communion



## Church Staff Holiday Time

Our offices will be closed  
from Christmas Day  
thru New Year's Day.

## Monday

Church Offices Closed  
Staff Holiday

## Tuesday

Church Offices Closed  
Staff Holiday

7 p.m.                  WMM Church  
Spanish-Speaking

## New Year's Eve

Church Offices Closed  
Staff Holiday

## New Year's Day 2026!

Church Offices Closed  
Staff Holiday

7 p.m.                  WMM Church  
Spanish-Speaking

## Friday

## Saturday

10 a.m.                Craft and Chat  
Lounge

