



People's to People

The Newsletter of the People's Church of Dover

United Church of Christ

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March 2021

The Scandal of the Cross

I have spoken to you before about “liberation theology”. This was the most dramatic shift in theological perspective – for both the Catholic and Protestant churches – since the Reformation of the 16th century. It began in small religious communities in Latin America, and exploded in acceptance soon after word of it got out. It is now the dominant theological perspective, in that the liberationist perspective pervades most preaching, thinking, teaching, and scholarship throughout Christendom. Only the most fundamentalist and extremist church bodies – such as the evangelical mega-churches and the Southern Baptist Convention – have resisted its influence. Here is a simplistic outline of its basic tenets:

1. Stuff *matters*. The material conditions of life *matter* –to God, of course, who cares deeply about our suffering. But who, when, and where we are in life matters greatly in how we *interpret* the Bible and the Cross. A slave owner, for instance, will interpret the Christian message very differently than will his slaves. A Nike sweatshop worker in Indonesia – who lives in the factory slums and struggles to support her children on 15 cents an hour – will have a different relationship to the gospel than will Phillip Knight, the billionaire owner of Nike, who refuses to give sweatshop workers a 5 cent raise. Since the Holy Spirit comes to us through our lives human experience, it matters what that experience is. Christ enters into our world in a particular cultural context.
2. It *matters* that Jesus was born to poor, powerless Palestinian Hebrews on the outskirts of a powerful empire. His people were conquered, ruled, and degraded. He had very little possessions. He was eventually condemned as a criminal, tortured, and murdered by that empire. Most of the time, he walked with the most powerless people, and was rejected by the wealthy and powerful.
3. In fact, the cross itself, and Jesus' promises, turns power on its head. Every human expectation of who is despised and who is honored, is reversed by the cross. The last will be first, and the first will be last.

“The real scandal of the gospel is this: humanity’s salvation is revealed in the cross of the condemned criminal Jesus, and humanity’s salvation is available only through our solidarity with the crucified people in our midst.”

Dr. James Cone.

4. Jesus himself states – in no uncertain terms – that he exists next to and even *within* the least powerful people: the hungry, prisoners, sick, oppressed, naked, thirsty, dying.
5. Not only in the story of Jesus of Nazareth, but indeed throughout the entire Bible, God almost *always* seems to side with the most despised, powerless, poor and oppressed people on earth. God not only sides with them, but joins them in their struggle for liberation. God fights with the weakest of the weak (like the Hebrew slaves in Egypt) against the powerful and wealthy rulers who dehumanize them (like pharaoh). In literally *thousands* of passages, God condemns wealth and power, and lifts up the victims of their rule, promising liberation, freedom, and redemption.
6. Almost all of the Holy Scripture is about God's work with and on behalf of the poor and oppressed. The message of the cross also seems to be about overcoming human sin, which, according to the Bible, is embodied in the hungry, sick, oppressed, and dying people. And it was through the crucifixion of a condemned prisoner that the salvation of humanity is accomplished. Therefore, it makes sense that the people who most clearly understand the message are those who personally identify with Jesus and his followers, those whose lived experience is similar to that of the slaves in Egypt, the abandoned orphans and widows in the desert, and tortured outcasts, those who themselves have been beaten and discarded by the work of wealth and power. It makes sense that those folks might have a special understanding of the gospel that wealthier folks just don't get.
7. For this reason, liberation theology calls on theologians and all people of faith to embrace the idea of the "hermeneutical privilege of the poor". That is, the lives of poor and oppressed folks is closer to being like the people who actually walked with Jesus and were healed by him, so they probably have insights that privileged folks lack. We should therefore listen closely to poor, and trust that they "get" the gospel more than privileged folks do. We seek to learn from the poor and oppressed.
8. The cross is a symbol of degradation, oppression, inequality, suffering, pain, and death (and, at one time, it was a real instrument of political torture). The Christian faith is that the salvation of the world comes *through* the cross, then our own salvation requires that we enter into the experience of the cross, that we abandon and renounce our extreme material privilege, and seek to overturn the structural sin that creates so much suffering to begin with.

What does the "scandal of the cross" mean for our congregation? What does it mean for the work that we are doing in Dover? What does it mean for your personal spiritual life?

The lectionary scripture this week is Mark 8:31-38. Before you read this article, you will have already heard me preach on that text. I invite you to reflect upon the scripture, my sermon, and the perspective of liberation theology, in light of your own experience and faith. What does this mean for your life, and for the life of People's Church of Dover, in a time such as this?

Rev. Dr. G. D. Hodge

Membership



Prayer List

We rely on you to let the office know when members or friends have a special pastoral need. Reverend Hodge will be glad to call, write, or visit anyone with a particular concern. Call the office to let Sheila know about prayer list changes. Names will be on the prayer list for three weeks, unless someone requests that they remain.

- Jeff and Judy Reed – Members
- Pat Hufnal - Member
- Tony Bucco – Father of Jennifer Childears
- Judy Smith and family – Friend Robin Hinderer
- Carly Fedena – Friend of John Downs
- Claire Zaragoza – Friend of Bill & Joyce Darling
- Denise Hoffert – Sister of Cleah Muntz
- Karen Trittenbach – Sister of Cleah Muntz
- Patricia M. Bartley – Friend of Paul Hanebutt
- Linda - Friend of Kathy Hanebutt
- Mark Goforth – Son-in-law of Serena Leiser
- Ellen – mother of Derrick Hodge

February Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 03/04 – Frederick and Cynthia Hotchkiss
- 03/06 – Judy Zingaro
- 03/07 – Glenn Hitchens
- 03/08 – Rod Thompson
- 03/13 – Helaine Jones
- 03/14 – Sage Cole
- 03/18 – Joseph and Judy Zingaro
- 03/24 – Jim Caldwell
- 03/27 – Ethan Opalecky

Worship



After worshipping via zoom one Sunday in February, we will once again enjoy worshipping in person in March as we practice social distancing and other safety measures. We will also celebrate Holy Communion as we continue through the season of Lent. Great care continues to be taken to ensure that our worship experience as well as the celebration of the sacraments, is as safe as it is spiritually uplifting. Worship continues to provide opportunities to enjoy uplifting music, and inspiring and challenging sermons, enhanced by the addition of new screens in the sanctuary and an improved Wifi system that enables life streaming of our services. And there is always the joy of seeing our church family face to face in the midst of these challenging times. As changes continue to happen in our church we look to the future of People's Church with renewed hope and energy. We hope to continue to see new and returning faces in the future. If you are not able to safely join us in worship, the service is being live streamed on Facebook or taped for later viewing on YouTube.

Rev. Judy Zingaro

Altar Flowers and Liturgist Schedule

	Flowers	Liturgist
03/07	Warren & Brenda Bouton	Serena Leiser
03/14	(Volunteer Needed)	Judy Zingaro
03/21	Cheryl Goldsmith	Cheryl Goldsmith
03/28	John & Jennifer Downs	Lyn Arnold

Finance



mail.

No news at this time; except send back your pledge cards via email to office@peopleschurchof dover.org or mail back in the enclosed stamp envelope that was provided via
Lyn Arnold

Meditation



The Meditation Group will be restarting on Tuesday, March 9 at 6 pm. Everyone is welcome whether you have never tried meditation before and are curious or you have a regular practice and would like to enhance it by meditating in a group setting. Our meditations are very "user friendly", either recorded or led by myself. This is a great way to shut out the busyness of your life, set aside your worries and just let your mind and body relax. If you are not able to come in the evening, let me know and I can set up a day time group also. Please let me know if you will be coming so I can have things set up appropriately and safely . I can be reached by phone or text at 781 492 1478 or email at sleiser1@verizon.net . Hope to see you on the 9th.

Serena Leiser

Trustees



The Trustees met this month to discuss construction updates, sustainability the learning pod program. We will be taking steps soon to create space for the "learning pods" that will be in located in rooms off the gym. This collaboration between the United Way of Delaware and People's Center for Youth will be a great outreach for our community youth.

Jennifer Childears

Administration

- Anyone interested in donating flowers for March and April please let Cheryl Goldsmith know at cheryl.goldsmith@cr.k12.de.us or 698-1074.
- ***The April newsletter deadline is March 26.***

Who We Are

The Purpose / Mission Statement of the
People's Church of Dover
United Church of Christ

The purpose of this church shall be to worship God who embraces all people; to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as our Revealer, Lord and Savior; to celebrate the sacraments; to facilitate spiritual growth; to practice Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal; to proclaim the Bible as the story of our faith and to educate and nourish that faith among all ages; to render loving service towards humankind; to be faithful in our stewardship responsibilities with our time, talent and treasures; and to strive for righteousness, justice, and ace.

Church Office – 302-674-4177

Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00

Email address: office@peopleschurchof dover.org

Staff

Rev. Dr. G. Derrick Hodge, Pastor

Kathy Hanebutt, Organist

Dr. Paul Hanebutt, Choir Director

Dr. Randal Revay, Sexton

Sheila Kay-Lawrence, Administrator

Board of Trustees

Jennifer Childears - Moderator

Sue Harris - Mission and Outreach

Vicky Healey - Clerk (Interim)

Serena Leiser – Pastoral Relations

Judy Zingaro - Diaconate

Mary Beth Andrews - Christian Education

Robin Hinderer - Treasurer

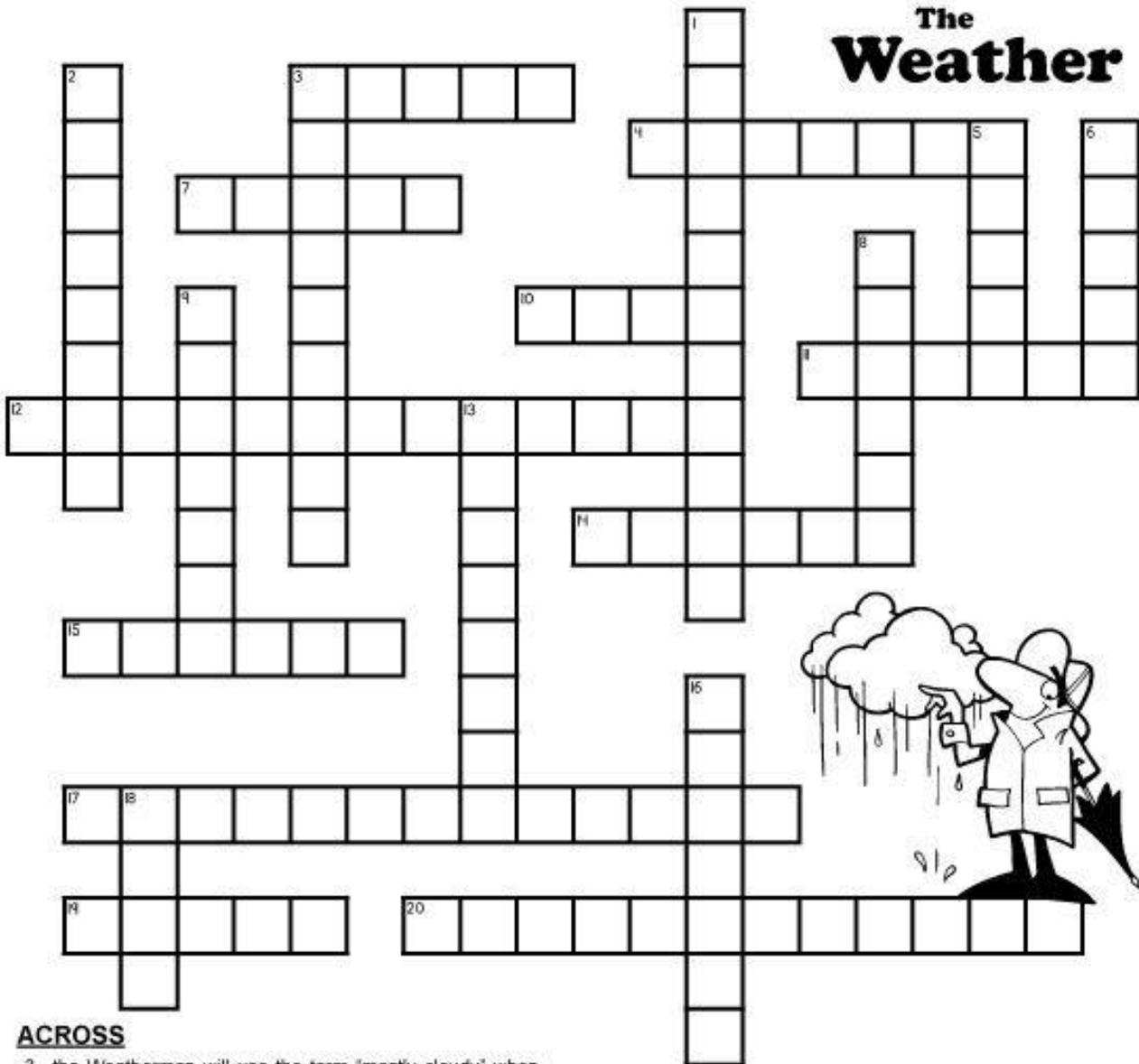
Lyn Arnold - Finance

Paul Hanebutt - Facilities Management

Richard Johnson - Management



The Weather



ACROSS

3. the Weatherman will use the term "mostly cloudy" when there are ___ eighths of cloud cover
4. smaller than normal drops of rain
7. ___ rain; the adjective the Weatherman will use when there's a lot of rain in a time period
10. a unit of measurement used to describe the amount of cloud cover at any given location
11. when there is 1/8 - 2/8 of the sky covered by clouds, a Weatherman will say it is ___ sunny
12. another word for a Weatherman
14. the Weatherman says it's cloudy when there's at least ___ percent of the sky covered with clouds
15. when 3/8 to 5/8 of the sky is covered by clouds, we say it is ___ sunny or ___ cloudy
17. water that falls from the clouds as rain, snow, sleet, or hail
19. snow and rain at the same time or place is called ___ precipitation
20. a storm that has lightning and thunder

DOWN

1. predicting or guessing future weather
2. an adjective that is used when only 30 - 50% of an area will be affected
3. an adjective that is used when only 10 - 20% of an area is likely to be affected
5. When trying to measure how much of the sky the clouds cover, how many equal parts does the Weatherman divide the visible sky into?
6. when there are no clouds in the sky
8. when all or almost all of the sky is covered with clouds
9. the Weatherman will use different adjectives to describe how much rain falls in this period of time (2 words)
13. the term used when clouds cover at least 95% of the sky
16. shorter duration than rain, suddenly starts or stops
18. the word the Weatherman will use when the amount of time it rains is steady and for a long time

Saint Patrick's Day Word Search

V G D H V C T Z K Q W P V A R
X Z L U S I F O S Y O C Q D Q
Y C E Q B P A N O T B N B R Z
L E P E H L A H O Q N J V A K
N L R U K K I F S E I X C C O
A T E J E C G N E I A M I L I
N I C S X O I R P Y R R T U D
F C H M L N G R V R T I N A S
A A A D J S I H E A H E I N N
N T U X Z M D F P M W P A V L
N D N E G E L W N B I U S U P
N T J W W K L Q U C H L Y U P
J B Q A P F Z O K U N Q O J X
I W I N B I R E L A N D G S Y
J D C K C O R M A H S Y B Z X



celtic
ireland
leprechaun
potofgold
shamrock

dublin
irish
limerick
rainbow
snakes

green
legend
patrick
saint

