



People's to People

Newsletter of the People's Church of Dover
United Church of Christ
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April 2023

Which path do you choose?

While searching through artwork for our Palm and Passion Sunday service, I came across this extraordinary painting by a contemporary artist. The painting seems to encapsulate much of the meaning of the Revelation, which we have been studying in the Lenten dinners. It also speaks to the evil that Jesus railed against, and the reason the ruling class was so enraged by him. So I decided to make this painting the focus of spiritual meditations in April. I suggest that you study the painting, then read the artist's own commentary, then pray, then study the painting some more. Let me know what insights come to you. – Reverend Hodge



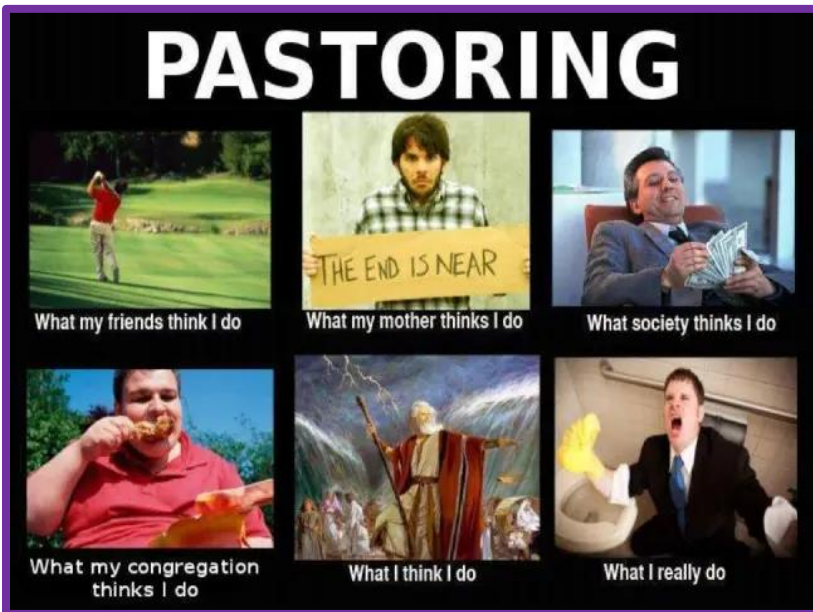
Jesus offers us a layered and complicated choice, one that is as complex as his own dualistic nature. The first option is self-denial, a heavy burden, and a lost — but saved — life. The second is gaining the whole world, but forfeiting comfort. This choice that Jesus calls us into may even seem like a no-brainer, but Jesus exposes the terrors that will befall him, and invites the crowd to knowingly face that path alongside him. If we're honest, it is extremely difficult to reject the power and wealth this world has to offer, and allow our life to take the shape of good news for all.

The choice is not an obvious one. The right side of this painting shows an opulent pile of riches, a crown, and endless power, while the left shows tattered and worn hands, new life blooming out of the wounds. This choice may

seem like a distant decision made long ago, but *it's a decision to be made every single day, one moment at a time.* In working for and with the downtrodden, poor, orphaned, widowed, ostracized, and oppressed, we will find ourselves.

– The Artist, Lauren Pittman, 2018

It is extremely difficult to reject the tempting power and wealth this world has to offer, and allow our life to take the shape of good news for all.



From the Moderator

A clergy evaluation is intended to assist the pastor in being as effective as he (or she) can be, within his current ministry setting. An evaluation of the pastor is also an opportunity for the congregation to assess itself and how it supports him and ministers alongside him.

During February and March, members of the Pastoral Support Committee conducted interviews with members of our congregation, asking them to identify what they perceive to be our pastor's strengths and areas that can be improved upon. The responses were summarized and discussed with Rev. Hodge and the Trustees. Here is a summary:

By its nature, such an evaluation is highly subjective. For example, several people reported high praise for Rev. Hodge's preaching describing it as powerful, thoughtful, and stimulating. Others felt the sermons were too technical, or political, or like lectures. Likewise, several commented that Rev. Hodge is very outgoing, engaging and upbeat while others felt that he could improve his interpersonal skills.

Nearly all the respondents felt Rev. Hodge is moving our congregation forward, inspiring us, networking with others, and providing the leadership and vision we need. He does this because he cares deeply about this congregation. Rev. Hodge also brings us strong administrative skills such as fiscal organization, grant writing, and networking that is moving the church and the community center forward.

There were several comments about the need to let the congregation carry more of the load, but during discussion with Rev. Hodge, it was difficult to give concrete examples. More often than not, there are a lack of people "stepping up to the plate" or following through with responsibilities.

Another part of the survey focused on how the congregation could support the pastor, strengthen our relationship with him, and contribute more to the ministry of the church. Some suggested stopping by the office just to chat, or inviting him for dinner, or participating more in small groups (lunch brunch, study groups, etc.) or getting to know him as a person (not just a pastor). At the same time, there is the need to maintain appropriate boundaries. A pastor can't be friends with congregants in the same

way we are friends with our best buddies. There need to be limits to personal sharing or probing.

As far as contributing to the ministry of the church, some felt they were already doing all they could. But others suggested several things we can all improve upon, such as: just show up, invite others to join you, stay energized and energizing, try something new (you might enjoy it), be honest, communicate more, think out of the box, and keep building relationships.



Thank you to all who engaged our members in thoughtful conversation and thank you to all who shared openly and honestly. Such dialogue will keep both pastor and congregation growing. If you have any questions regarding the evaluation or wish to see the specific answers given, please reach out to me.

James M. Caldwell

Response from the Pastor

As most of you know by now, I have decided to ask you to convert my 3-year term as a Designated Pastor into a "Settled" pastorate, which has no defined end date. This was not an easy decision for me. I decided to stay because I believe in what we are working toward. I believe in the mission of the People's Community Center, and in the revitalization of People's Church of Dover. I believe that the work that we are doing – to not abandon our neighborhood, not waste our phenomenal assets, not give up on PCD entirely, but to work to make it sustainable, vital, and faithful – that this work is sacred and blessed by God himself. We will succeed! And what we leave behind will bless generations of people to follow, just as

previous generations kept the church vital so that we could be here today, learning and growing. So I am willing to stay here and help you build the new relationships that will revitalize this community of faith,

HOWEVER, I can't do it alone! I am not your savior, and I am not your hired hand. I will lead you and work with you, but I could not possibly build the new PCD alone. I need you! We need you. The children of this neighborhood need you. *God needs you.*

I know folks say that they are tired. You ran the church with no real pastor, for years before I came. Some say that they are too old to launch a herculean effort. Others' schedules (and budgets) are stretched to the limit, and others lack the confidence that

they have any meaningful contribution to offer. Like Jesus in the desert, we are tempted to give up on the work to which we have been called. It would be much, much easier to retreat into our homes and simply wait to die (individually, and as a congregation). But that would not be a faithful response to God's incredible gifts. We *must* make this work – together!

That means that God needs *everyone* to step up to the plate. Yes, your budgets are tight and your schedules are worse, but both of those things could be adjusted to give a priority to church work. Yes, you have tried and failed before, but (unless you let past failure get you down) that has nothing to do with the challenge before us.

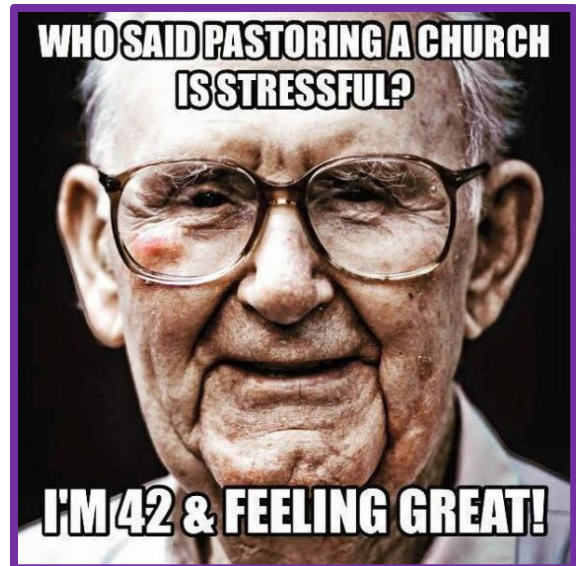
What we need, most of all, is for folks to step up to the plate and work for the community of God's people. We need you – everyone – to show up for Sunday services. (Yes, I know, some of you don't like sitting still for more than 60 minutes, and yes, my sermons are longer than those to which you are accustomed.) We need you to spread the word about the amazing things that are happening here. We need you to sign up to be a liturgist or prepare the Sunday morning snacks. We need people willing to join small home-based groups for Bible study, book study, or prayer circles. We need people to do little chores around the church or send

cards to shut-ins. The Pastoral Relations Committee needs your feedback.

And most of all, we need your energy. When, during the past three years, I

...And most of all, we need your energy...I can't be the sole cheerleader of the team!

have said that I need your help, it is not



because I have been working too many hours and need you to take things off my plate. What I mean is that I need you to contribute to the energy level of the congregation. I can't be the sole cheerleader of the team. I need your smiles, Your enthusiasm. I need you to show up on Sunday mornings, even if you would really rather sleep late or goof off. We need a commitment from each and every one of you, that church is important, and that you will make an effort to be a part of it. I promise you this: the more energy you provide to a project of revitalization, the more energy you will receive back.

So show up. Make your feelings known, Cheer when great things happen. Smile. Thank God! Tell others. Share your pain and frustrations with us. Be a part of the solution. Search your heart for gifts to offer God's work – gifts that you may have known that you possess. Then thank God again!

And if we all do that, then something amazing will happen. God has promised it. It cannot fail. Amen.

Holy Week Events

April 6 --**Maundy Thursday**, 7 p.m., The Presbyterian Church, 54 South State Street.

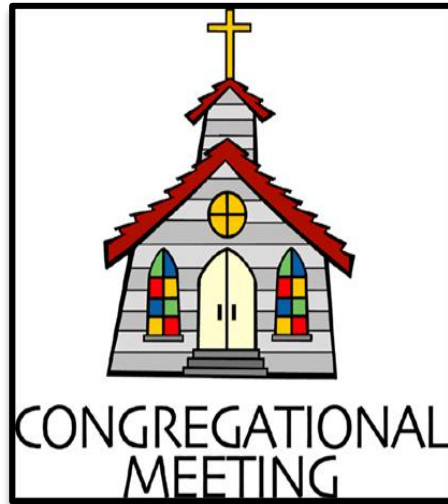
April 7 – **Good Friday**, 12 noon, Wesley United Methodist Church sanctuary, 209 South State. Sponsored by Central Delaware Interfaith Alliance.

April 7 – **The Walk of the Cross**, following the Good Friday service. Begins at The Green, walking down State Street with stops at various churches (including People’s) for prayer.

April 9 – **Easter**, 10 a.m., People’s Church.



A congregational meeting is called for 16 April at 11:30, in the chapel.



The Congregation will vote as to whether to call Rev. Dr. G. D. Hodge as our settled pastor. We also need your input about a possible sanctuary remodel.

Peoples Church Capital Campaign

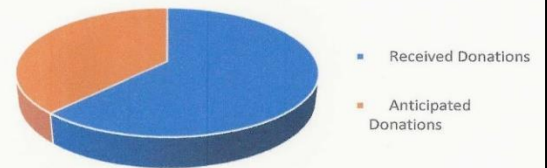
2022-2025

Goal

\$142,700.00

	Dollar	%
Committed Donations	\$171,402.00	120%
Amount to Goal		0%
Received Donations	\$106,261.15	74.46%
Anticipated Donations	\$65,398.19	45.83%

Percentage to Plan



43 Donors / 24 FULFILLED

AS OF
4/4/2023

Updates from the Trustees

Diaconate

Ed Middleton has agreed to head up a group who would assist the pastor in providing congregational care to homebound members, those in nursing homes, and others.

He has already put together a list of People's members who might want or need some particular attention and caregiving. He has also heard from one person that there are perhaps some folks on the list who might need to be removed and others added to the list. Ed has also begun reaching out to members.

The next step is to organize others who will make calls or visits, get a clear idea about who needs to be contacted, and develop a plan to provide consistent compassionate care for those most vulnerable in our community. If you would like to be involved please contact Ed.

Communications

Photographs for the new website were taken on the 5th. Once a final review of the photos has been made, there will be just a few more loose ends to tie up and the website will be done and ready to go. If all goes well, the site will be up and running by mid-April.

Space has been secured for a tent for Dover Days (May 6th) and Delaware Pride 2023 (June 10th). I will be working on the promotional items and getting volunteers to work the table and to walk in the parade. A banner is being made and tote bags with

promotional info will be given away at the events. Other ideas are welcome. –Jennifer Childears

Education and Faith Development

The study of *Spiritual Disciplines* continues with Part 2 – “Outward Disciplines.” There is no meeting in April (Easter).

Finance

The Capital Campaign and the Stewardship drive are doing well.

The accountant, administrative staff, and audit firm continue to work on straightening out the books.

Quarterly statements of donations will be going out. –Lyn Arnold

Administration

Office hours are 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Thursday, or by appointment.

If you want to add someone to the prayer list, please call Becky in the office 302-674-4177 or email: office@peopleschurchofdover.org.

There are sign-up sheets on the small bulletin board for altar flowers, liturgy participation, and happy hour!

Service Next Week:
Jesus and Political Docetism

April 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 8:00am Coptic Church (Sanctuary) 8:00am Adventista Church (Chapel) 1:00pm CODA (Bride's Room)
2 PALM SUNDAY 10:00am Peoples Church Service (Sanctuary) 11:30am Victory Church Service (Sanctuary)	3 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship)	4 3:30pm PCC After School Program 5:30pm NA Book Study (Fellowship)	5 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:00pm Adventista Church	6 3:30pm PCC After School Program	7 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:30pm Steps to Recovery (Fellowship)	8 8:00am Adventista Church (Chapel) 8:00am Coptic Church (Sanctuary) 1:00pm CODA (Bride's Room)
9 EASTER 10:00am Peoples Church Service (Sanctuary) 11:30am Victory Church Service (Sanctuary)	10 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship)	11 3:30pm PCC After School Program 5:30pm NA Book Study (Fellowship)	12 10:00am Meditation (Meditation Room) 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:00pm Adventista Church	13 3:30pm PCC After School Program	14 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:30pm Steps to Recovery (Fellowship)	15 8:00am Coptic Church (Sanctuary) 8:00am Adventista Church (Chapel) 1:00pm CODA (Bride's Room)
16 10:00am Peoples Church Service (Sanctuary) 11:00am People's Church Congregation Meeting (Chapel) 11:30am Victory Church Service (Sanctuary)	17 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship)	18 3:30pm PCC After School Program 5:30pm NA Book Study (Fellowship)	19 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:00pm Adventista Church	20 3:30pm PCC After School Program	21 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:30pm Steps to Recovery (Fellowship)	22 8:00am Coptic Church (Sanctuary) 8:00am Adventista Church (Chapel) 1:00pm CODA (Bride's Room)
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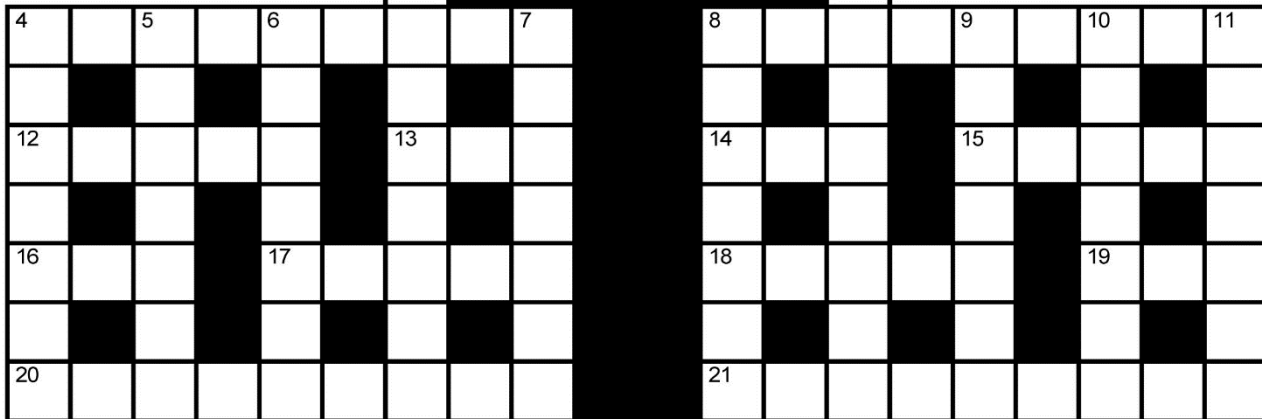
Bible Crossword X

Across

Down

- 1** Donkey (3)
- 2** Jesus' Father (3)
- 4** One of the twelve (9)

- 1** One of God's messengers (5,2,3,4)
- 3** 1940s archaeological find (4,3,7)



- 8** Didn't believe in resurrection (9)
- 12** One of David's warriors (5)
- 13** First word of the Lord's Prayer (3)
- 14** New Testament name for Noah (3)
- 15** Wish harm upon (5)
- 16** Hole in the ground (3)
- 17** Adversary (5)
- 18** Saviour (5)
- 19** First woman (3)
- 20** Mother of John the Baptist (9)
- 21** Family of priests (9)
- 22** Third son of Jacob (4)
- 23** Hates (8)
- 26** Assurances (8)
- 30** Endured pain (8)
- 31** Return from the dead (4)
- 32** Intercessor (8)
- 35** Decorating (8)
- 39** Old Testament book of the Bible (4)
- 40** The prince of Rosh, Mesech and Tubal (3)
- 42** A wise insect (3)
- 44** Dwelling place of kings (6)
- 45** Make bigger (8)

- 4** Tread down (7)
- 5** Father of Jonah (7)
- 6** Very salty water bordering Israel (4,3)
- 7** Defensive structures (11)
- 8** Refuges (11)
- 9** Dirty (7)
- 10** Devout (7)
- 11** Pieces of money (7)
- 24** Used to listen (3)
- 25** Used to see (3)
- 26** Positions (5)
- 27** Made available (7)
- 28** Snake (7)
- 29** Destroyed along with Gomorrah (5)
- 33** Finish (3)
- 34** Possess (3)
- 35** King of the Amalekites (4)
- 36** Last letter of the Greek alphabet (5)
- 37** Almost sacrificed by Abraham (5)
- 38** Present (4)
- 41** Unfasten (4)
- 43** Fish traps (4)