



People's to People

Newsletter of the People's Church of Dover
 United Church of Christ
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May and June 2023

Where are we on the big renovation? What's been happening?

This is what Joseph Zingaro, Derrick Hodge, and our UCC consultants have been working on:

1. The architect: we finally have a contract with Becker Morgan to complete the plans:
 - a. an expansion of the new HVAC system throughout the entire building, including the removal of the boiler and radiators; and
 - b. plans for a future renovation of the sanctuary.

When will the architects complete this work? No one knows. Getting phone calls returned is not easy in Dover...

2. Relationship Building: This is one of Dr. Hodge's specialties, and he has been doing a bang-up job on it! But we still needs a lot more work building relatinsips with neighbors and with potential missional partners (people and organizatrions who can run programs out of rthe community center, pay us rent, and thus pay for the renovation costs).
3. Funding: This aspect of the project has been taking up much of Dr. Hodge's time. We have been writing grants both for proqramming and for the "Big Dig". Below is a chart of what we have applied for, what we have received, and what we are doing now.

Source	Amount	Purpose	Status and Notes
City of Dover	\$142,000	Basement Renovations	Awarded; in progress
Federal Government	\$67,000	Basement Renovations	Awarded; pending
Senator Coons	\$1.5 million	Big Dig (elevator, HVAC, etc.)	Failed – not awarded
City of Dover	\$63,000	Programming (homeless)	Awarded; pending
Delaware Legislature	\$1.5 million	Big Dig (elevator, HVAC, etc.)	Currently being written
Delaware Energy	\$200,000	Building-wide HVAC overhaul	To be written in June

So we have already received about \$275,000 in grant funding since we began, two years ago! This is great, but it is only a drop in the bucket. The Big Dig will cost about \$3.8 million!! And all of our programs need separate funding. So we will write lots more grants in the coming year.

And to enable us to reduce the amount of the endowment that we spend each year just to pay the bills, we need all members and friends to step up to the plate and pledge more.

A new debate forum in our newsletter:

Biblical Wisdom for Times Such as These

People's Church of Dover is a brave church! Brave not only because we have stepped out on a limb of faith with our revitalization program, but also because we do not shy away from tough topics. We don't avoid talking about important things, just because we cling to a false unity based on silence. "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, cowardice, or fear, but of power, love, and sound judgment." (2 Timothy 1:7) In the spirit of courage, let us debate topics of contemporary importance, asking that urgent question: ***Is there a word from the Lord?***



Diverse viewpoints are welcome in our debate forum! Here are the criteria for submissions:

1. Whatever position you take on a topic of contemporary public interest, you must base your article on sound Biblical analysis. We are not interested in anyone's *opinions*; we want our conclusions to be based on the Bible. So base your position on Biblical faith, not personal opinion.
2. We are not interested in naming or shaming particular political parties. As much as possible, write about the *principle*, without attacking individuals. And we certainly never want to advocate for any particular candidate for public office. So please do not mention anyone whose name we Delawareans will someday see in the voting booth!

As the first entry in our debate forum, we offer the words of a theologian and President of an eminent Christian seminary, Union Theological Seminary.

*To what extent does the following article by meet the above criteria?
How would you write this article differently, if it were you?*

The "God-given right" to guns is a cash-fueled sham

By Reverend Dr. Serena Jones

The Bible is a lynchpin of the pro-gun movement. In every corner of our country, purportedly Christian leaders lean into the narrative that bearing arms is a God-given right – one that should not be restricted in any way. So, as our nation reels from yet another mass shooting — this time, a gunman killed three children and three adults at an elementary school in Nashville — far-right Christian leaders continue to loudly and proudly lead the charge to funnel more guns into our communities.

More thoughts and prayers.

As the bodies pile up nationwide, so-called Christians are leading the cause to stop any meaningful restrictions on deadly weapons.

Just days ago, the Florida House of Representatives passed a bill that would nix background checks and training to carry a concealed gun. A major champion of the legislation, Representative Adam Botana, said this bill upholds “a constitutional God-given right endowed by our creator.”

A few weeks prior, Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana helped introduce legislation that would reduce regulations on pistol braces – which can make guns easier to conceal. He stated, “Law-abiding gun owners should not be turned into criminals overnight for exercising their God-given right.” Meanwhile, Senator Ted Budd of North Carolina, while slamming background checks for gun owners, once proclaimed, “Our right to life and liberty are absolutely God-given and that’s what the Second Amendment protects.”

Senator Ron Johnson of Wisconsin had the audacity to blame the Uvalde shootings on the “secularization of society” and the “loss of faith.” And rather than any calls for restricted guns, his solution was “renewed faith.” “As a Christian, we talk about the church,” Representative Tim Burchett, R-Tenn., said after this week’s shooting. “I’ve said this many times, I think we really need a revival in this country.” He went on to admit: “We’re not gonna fix it.”

For conservative Christian politicians like these, God is a zealous gun advocate. That message is echoed by local leaders, pastors, community groups, and more across our nation.

But as a theologian with deep biblical expertise, I must say, I’m struggling to find the part in the Bible about unlimited access to guns. I hate to break it to these “devoted” religious followers: The Bible says absolutely nothing about allowing people to run amuck with guns. It’s a completely ludicrous reading of the text.

Generally, conservative politicians justify this vague connection by claiming the Bible gives people the right to self-defense. But that’s a preposterous jump from the text. The Bible barely touches on a right to self-defense. There are a few sentences that could allude to one – but in no way is there a concrete message on the subject. Plus, the deadliest weapon the Bible ever mentions is a sword – hardly an AR-15 that can kill dozens of people in seconds.

All in all, it seems to me that the Bible would perhaps support a hefty supply of pepper spray. But weapons of war? That’s absurd.

Curiously though, there seems to be another all-powerful force fueling these religious pleas for deadly weapons: cold-hard cash.

I suspect that these politicians are not in fact hearing the whispers of God, but rather the “ch-ching!” of cash. The National Rifle Association has been funneling huge chunks of cash to pro-gun politicians for decades. Senator Cassidy, for example, has been supported with \$2.9 million from the NRA, according to data from OpenSecrets. Senators Johnson and Budd have received a respective \$2.6 million and \$1.8 million in support. And that's not even to mention the hundreds of thousands of dollars these men have taken from other gun PACS.

Now for some *real* Biblical analysis: On virtually every page, the Bible tells us to value and protect human life. Life is sacred. In the Book of 1 Corinthians, for example, the apostle Paul explains, “God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.” In the Book of Job, Job explains that in God's hand “is the life of every living thing.” And many times, the Bible notes that humans were made in God's image.

The fact is, time and time again, guns are used not for self-defense, but to claim innocent lives. It's far too easy for them to fall into the wrong hands and shatter families and communities.

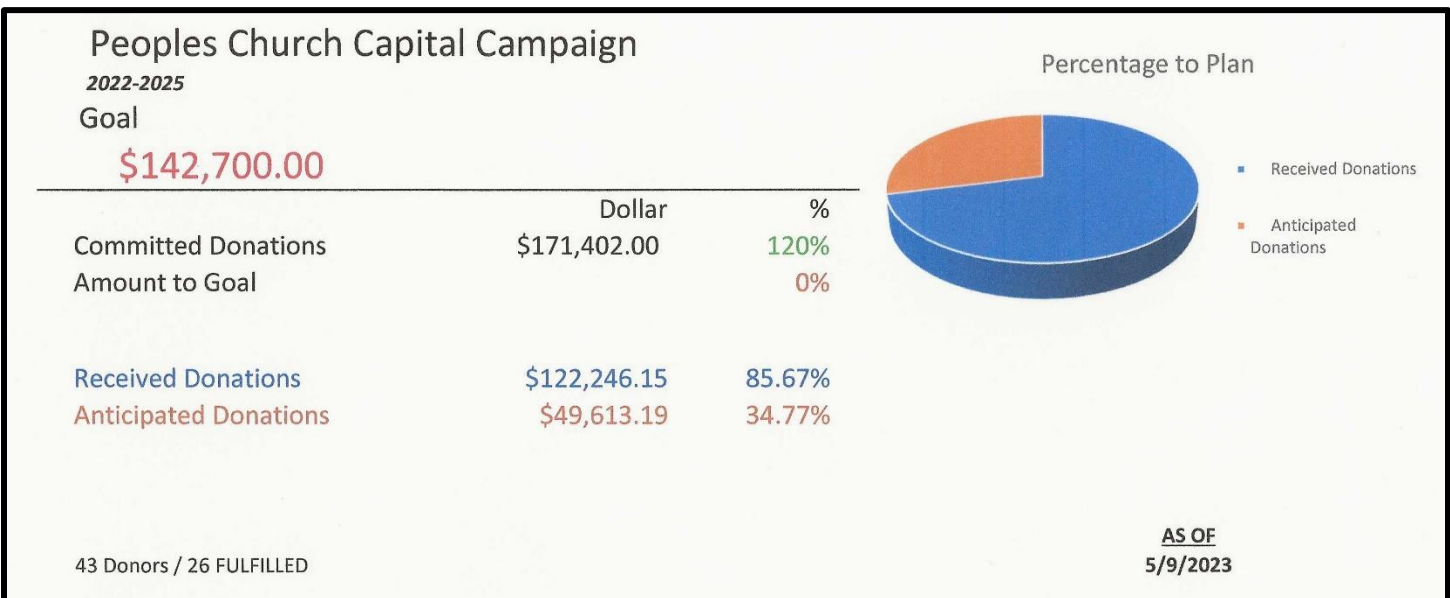
Claiming a “God-given right” to guns would be laughable if it weren't so deadly. If these conservative politicians insist on spouting pro-gun policies, they should at least leave our all-loving God out of it.



At a recent meeting of the National Rifle Association

*Now it's your turn! Remember: whatever position you take on whichever issue, find Biblical texts to back up your ideas. We are interested in discerning **God's** opinions – not ours! Send your submissions to Rebecca in the office.*

The Capital Campaign proceeds are being spent just as we promised: for children's programming, drainage system, sanctuary air conditioning, new basement windows, and restoration of our stained glass windows. Here is the most recent graphic from Gerald Rice. See also Jean's report, below.



Updates from the Trustees

Moderator

For those who may not have been able to attend the congregational meeting in April, there is good news! People's Church has extended the call to Rev. Hodge to transition from our designated pastor to settled pastor. And he accepted!

But there are conditions to his acceptance and continuation as our pastor:

- Show Up – we all need to make an extra effort to be present for worship, study groups, service projects, fellowship activities, etc. It will make a huge difference in the life and vitality of our church if we make it a priority to be present and participate.
- Bring some energy – if you want a really exciting worship service, let's bring some enthusiasm and energy with us on Sundays. When we see friends and neighbors, let's talk up the great things happening at People's and let them know how excited we are. Joyfully volunteer to help however you can.
- Timely Feedback – Do you love the sermon? Let it be known. If you got lost in the middle of the sermon, let that be known, too. If you have questions about decisions made by the Trustees, ask someone – now, not six months from now. If you want to sing a favorite hymn or a new song, suggest it. No one can read your mind, so please speak up.
- Take responsibility for growth – as it was said at the meeting, shepherds don't beget

sheep, sheep do. Churches that are growing do so because members invite others to come with them, not because of the pastor. That's a fact. If you're glad to be part of People's Church let people know and don't hesitate to invite them to experience the great things happening here.

We'll be celebrating this transition with the Installation of Rev. Hodge as our pastor on Sunday, May 7th at 3:00 p.m. There will be special guest preachers at the morning worship and at the Installation service. A festive reception will follow. Guests will include UCC clergy from around the conference, Dover area pastors, volunteers from Code Purple, local dignitaries, and friends and supporters of People's Church. Most importantly, we'd be honored by the presence of every single member of our congregation. Please join us for this very special occasion.

Have you noticed the changes to the bulletin board in the hallway? Cleah, our queen of bulletin boards, has agreed to keep it updated with helpful information presented in an attractive, eye-catching way. She'll be updating it periodically, so if you want to post anything, let her know.

Speaking of posting things, the minutes from the Trustees meetings will be on the bulletin board for you to read.

The second Sunday of April was Easter, so the monthly study group didn't meet. Well, the second Sunday of May is Mother's Day, so we won't meet again. BUT, we will jump back into Celebration of Discipline in June (I promise). Mark your calendar now and pick up the handout on "Solitude" from the church office.

–Jim Caldwell

People's Community Center

Like many Spring plants, a lot is going on 'under the surface.' You won't be seeing any reconfiguring of space yet – but, like good carpenters we are measuring twice before we do any cutting. I recently watched a show on HGTV where the construction team had to wait to get approval of their planned renovations before they could begin. They seemed frustrated because they had the plans drawn and were ready to go, but had to wait for approval (from engineers, the city, etc.) before they could build.

Rev. Hodge and I meet every other week with our consultants (AIM). I have never been involved in such a huge project, so I am often surprised by the pace of change and what is needed before we begin any renovation work. As an example, we spent more than a month waiting for the engineering group to submit plans in the format we needed (so our attorney could review them more easily).

The People's Community Center now has its own Board of Directors composed of members of our church and members from the community. It has non-profit status – another thing we needed to apply (and wait) for. Our goal is to make space (in the church building) that can be rented to other like-minded non-profits. The space we are for renovations and then rent will not compromise what People's Church needs for its functions. The monies from the rented space can then be used to defray the costs for any changes to the sanctuary we are considering.

We are thinking about eventually making some changes to the sanctuary. The current space is much more than we need (or, most

likely, will need in the future). Here are some of our thoughts: reduce the size of the sanctuary and reconfigure the space so that the space taken up by the current sanctuary will become a new sanctuary and fellowship meeting area; possibly leveling the floor and using chairs to replace pews (which can create more options for seating configurations) and removing the carpet. We will not have to do anything to the stained-glass windows – they will stay as they are.

Thanks to Rev. Hodge we have received several grants to help fund the Peoples Community Center project. Rev. Hodges and I are looking for other grant writers – if you know of any please let us know. We are also thinking about organizations that may want to rent our space and have already had some discussions (with no formal commitments on either part) about future relationships.

If the saying, "Good things come to those who wait" is true – we will be the recipient of great things.
--Joe Zingaro

Communications

Our new website is now live! Be sure to visit and tell your friends about our redesigned website: www.peopleschurchofdover.org.

Thank you to Aerielle Bartlett Kohout for the photographs. If you like her work, please be sure to check out her Facebook page- Images by Aerielle. Also with our improved website, once our livestream issues are corrected, you will be able to watch the livestream service without needing to be on Facebook or YouTube- you can watch it from the webpage on our site.

Thank you to everyone that made Dover Days a success. We promoted the People's Community Center by walking in the parade and handing out information and tote bags with the community center logo. Our hope is that this brings some volunteers, renters and sponsors to the center.

If you are on Facebook- be sure to catch "Scripture Corner (with Jennifer)" on Mondays and Thursdays in May. The series started on May 8th and is a two-to-three-minute video of my personal take on certain scriptures. I hope that you will find it engaging and be inspired to comment and discuss your thoughts with others on Facebook.

— Jennifer Childears

Pastoral Support

The Pastoral Support Committee will be meeting to discuss ways to assist Rev. Dr. Hodge. We want to ensure that we are available for whatever is needed to make his job less hectic and provide feedback from the congregation to him. This could include multiple options including mailings, phone calls, or a drop box for cards. Anyone who wishes to comment on the Reverend can contact the following members: Jim Caldwell, Kathy Hanebutt, Joe Zingaro, Serena Leiser, or C.J. Santiago.

— C. J. Santiago

Building

Many in-house projects have been underway in the past couple of months:

1. Addressing WIFI and other in-house communication projects.

2. Addressing safety glass replacement on the broken stain glass window protection.
3. Addressing the replacement of the South entry door near the men's restroom. COMPLETED
4. Addressing the replacement of the bowling alley door. COMPLETED
5. Addressing application of WIFI locks for added security for the building.
6. Addressing the repair of the bell tower cast iron gates. COMPLETED
7. Addressing the cleanliness of the church yard and physical plant.
8. Addressing the competency of the HVAC in its present state.
9. Identifying and addressing the day-to-day maintenance of physical plant.
10. Addressing repairs to the bell tower, primarily repairing leaks to the roof that are impacting the structural integrity of the building/tower.
 - a. Replacing the marble steps in the bell tower COMPLETED
 - b. Repairing the cast iron gates in the bell tower COMPLETED
 - c. Sanding and repainting of the cast iron fencing around the church yard COMPLETED
11. Replacing the broken window in the stairwell outside of the men's restroom. COMPLETED
12. Cleaning carpet of the hallway, chapel and sanctuary. COMPLETED
13. Stripping and refinishing vinyl flooring. COMPLETED — Paul Hanebutt

Capital Campaign Status

June 8th of last year Peoples Church embarked on an ambitious, three-year Capital Campaign endeavoring to raise \$142,700.00 to refurbish our beloved, but badly in need of repairs, church. The response from our generous congregation has been overwhelming. Forty-three donors stepped up and committed, not to \$142,700.00, but indeed our current committed amount is \$171,402.00, or 120% of the original goal. Glory be to our Lord!

26 of the 43 donors have fulfilled their individual commitments.

Not only have you, as a congregation, excelled in topping the original goal, but \$121,726.15 has been received into Peoples Dover Federal Credit Union account to date. That amount is 85.13% of the total commitment received in just 11 months of a three-year (36 month) campaign is nothing short of remarkable and a true reflection of your desire to what is needed in this world and of you Love, Faith, and Trust in God.

Thank you!! God Bless you all, today, tomorrow, and always.

— Your Capital Campaign Committee

Administration Notes

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!

From our members, Michele and George Blair, who will be performing in the British farce (without accents): "Old Actors Never Die...They Simply Lose the Plot" at the Smyrna Opera House Dessert Theatre. Performances are on May 12 and 13 at 7:00 pm and May 14 at 2:00 pm. Tickets are available at 302-653-4236 or www.smyrnaoperahouse.org. The prices are \$20 General Admission, \$18 Seniors and Military, \$16 Opera House.

Congratulations to Alicia Jackson and Donna Stovall on their recent marriage at People's Church! Donna survived her surgery, and is now undergoing chemotherapy. When she is healthy again, they will be back at People's.



From Joseph DiRocco

When asked to write about my present life I felt honored, I am very proud to be a part of People's Church. Currently I am in Wilmington, very actively working the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous with a sponsor who truly walks the walk. I live in a aftercare shelter that is giving me the freedom to address inner issues that will help set me free from active addiction. What I have to do is simply to pass it on, in order to keep what was so freely given to me. Some of you know my family situation. Great news...My brother is healing slowly. I spend time with him and support him in his physical recovery. I am blessed. I love you all.

— Joseph DiRocco

May 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship)	2 3:30pm PCC After School Program 5:30pm NA Book Study (Fellowship)	3 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:00pm Adventista Church	4 3:30pm PCC After School Program	5 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:30pm Steps to Recovery (Fellowship)	6 8:00am Iglesia Gethsemani Church (Chapel) 8:00am Coptic Church (Sanctuary)
7 10:00am Peoples Church Service-- Installation Service (Sanctuary) 11:30am Victory Church Service (Sanctuary) 12:00pm Churchwide Installation festivities for Pastor Hodge	8 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship)	9 3:30pm PCC After School Program 5:30pm NA Book Study (Fellowship)	10 10:00am Meditation (Meditation Room) 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:00pm Adventista Church	11 3:30pm PCC After School Program	12 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:30pm Steps to Recovery (Fellowship)	13 8:00am Iglesia Gethsemani Church (Chapel) 8:00am Coptic Church (Sanctuary)
14 Paul and Kathy Hanebutt vacation 10:00am Peoples Church Service (Sanctuary) 11:30am Victory Church Service (Sanctuary)	15 Paul and Kathy Hanebutt vacation 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship)	16 Paul and Kathy Hanebutt vacation 3:30pm PCC After School Program 5:30pm NA Book Study (Fellowship)	17 Paul and Kathy Hanebutt vacation 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:00pm Adventista Church	18 Paul and Kathy Hanebutt vacation 3:30pm PCC After School Program	19 Paul and Kathy Hanebutt vacation 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:30pm Steps to Recovery (Fellowship)	20 Paul and Kathy Hanebutt vacation 8:00am Iglesia Gethsemani Church (Chapel) 8:00am Coptic Church (Sanctuary)
21 Paul and Kathy Hanebutt vacation 10:00am Peoples Church Service (Sanctuary) 11:30am Victory Church Service (Sanctuary)	22 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship)	23 3:30pm PCC After School Program 5:30pm NA Book Study (Fellowship)	24 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:00pm Adventista Church	25 3:30pm PCC After School Program	26 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 3:30pm PCC After School Program 6:30pm Steps to Recovery (Fellowship)	27 8:00am Iglesia Gethsemani Church (Chapel) 8:00am Coptic Church (Sanctuary)
28 10:00am Peoples Church Service (Sanctuary) 11:30am Victory Church Service (Sanctuary)	29 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship)	30 5:30pm NA Book Study (Fellowship)	31 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 6:00pm Adventista Church			

June 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 6:30pm Steps to Recovery (Fellowship)	3 8:00am Coptic Church (Sanctuary) 8:00am Iglesia Gethsemani Church (Chapel)
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18 Rev. Ed Middleton preaching People's Church in honor of 50th anniversary of his ordination 10:00am Peoples Church Service (Sanctuary) 11:30am Victory Church Service (Sanctuary)	19 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship)	20 5:30pm NA Book Study (Fellowship)	21 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 6:00pm Adventista Church	22	23 11:30am Narcotics Anonymous (Fellowship) 6:30pm Steps to Recovery (Fellowship)	24 8:00am Coptic Church (Sanctuary) 8:00am Iglesia Gethsemani Church (Chapel)
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