



**Dover First UMC's Weekly Newsletter**  
**February 27, 2026**

**Let's Worship Together**  
Sundays at 10:20 a.m.  
in the Sanctuary

**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  
and ways to give.

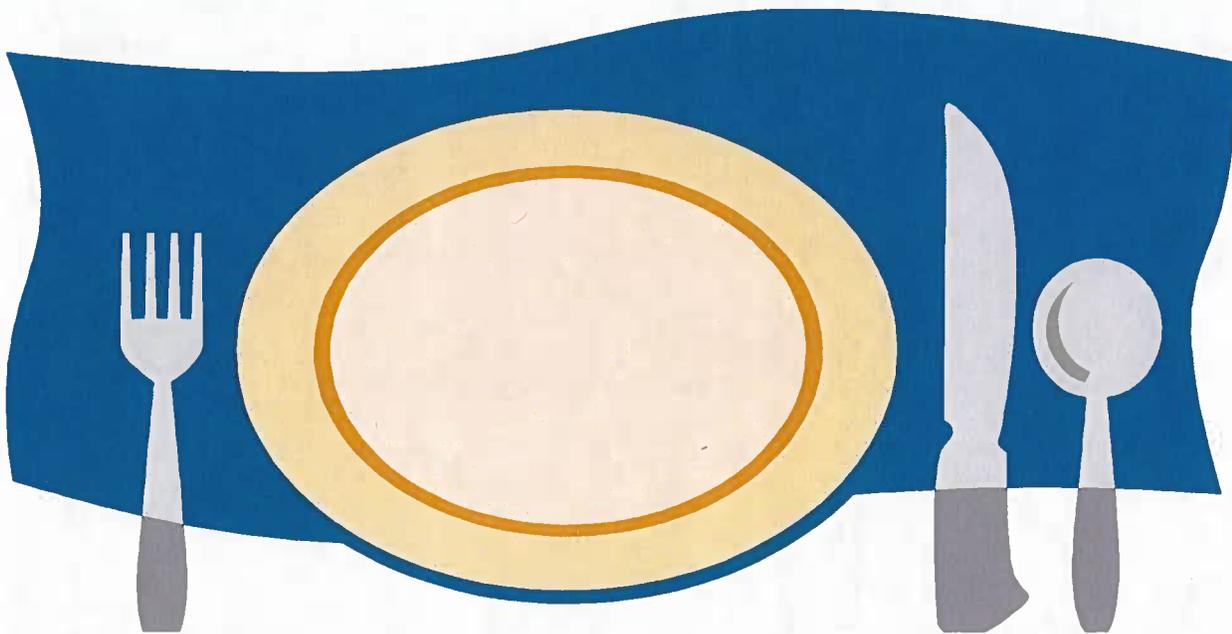
**Reflection by Pastor Wesley George**

This week we are wrapping up The Gospel of Matthew. As I read the story of Jesus' death and Resurrection I think about something that NT Wright pointed out. When the Gospel writers tell the story of Jesus' death they do so with frequent references to the Old Testament, especially the Psalms. When they discuss Jesus' resurrection they do not reference the Old Testament but rely on their own words.

As I read through this passage again, I'm struck by the idea that Psalms help us in our times of grief and when we sing joy we sing from our own hearts.

I hope that finds your heart this week.

**What did you find interesting this week?**  
**How does the story of Jesus' death impact you?**



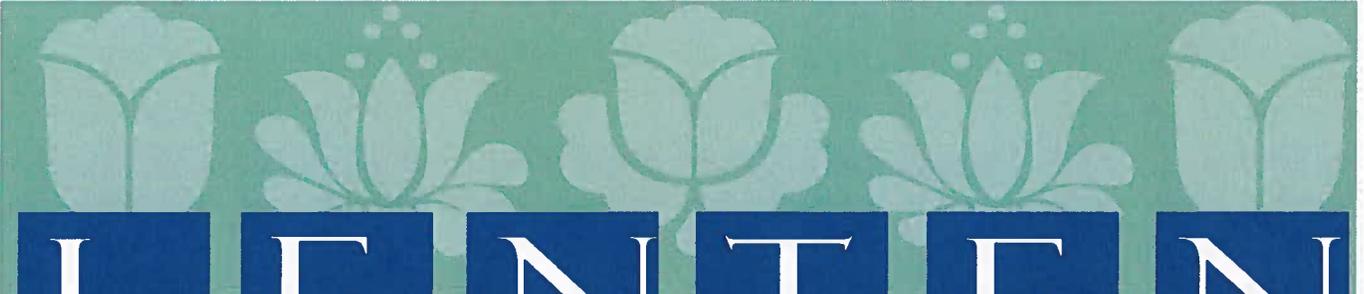
## Appreciation Fellowship Meal

**Troop #94 Scouts and Leaders  
Invite All Dover First Members  
60 and Over to Be Their Guests  
for a Delicious Dinner with:**

**Ham, Mashed Potatoes, Salad  
Green Beans, Dessert and Beverages**

**This Free Fellowship Meal is Shared  
with Thanks to the Church Family  
for 70 Plus Years of Support.**

**Monday, March 9th at 5:30 p.m.  
in the Fellowship Hall  
Please RSVP by Signing Up in the Lobby**



# LENTEN

## OUTREACH

**This Year's Special Lenten  
Envelope Offerings Will Support  
the Mission of Beneath the Shade**

Beneath the Shade is a transitional living space for women who are choosing recovery and want to rebuild their lives and explore what having a relationship with God might be all about. Beneath the Shade is for women who have lived with substance use disorders, have at least 30 days substance free and know they need more time in a semi-structured and loving setting in order to live successfully on their own.

**To support this mission in our community,  
please pick up a Lenten Envelope in the lobby,  
and return your donations on Easter Sunday.**

**Visit [beneaththeshade.org](http://beneaththeshade.org) to learn more.**



# Welcome to Worship

## March 1, 2026

### Welcome and Announcements

Prelude "My Song is Love Unknown"  
Setting by Michael Burkhardt

### Call to Worship Psalm 121

L: I lift up my eyes to the hills.

L: From whence does my help come?

**All: My help comes from the Lord,**

**All: Who made heaven and earth.**

L: The Lord will not let your foot be moved,

L: The Lord who keeps you will not slumber.

**All: Behold, the One who keeps Israel**

**All: Will neither slumber nor sleep.**

L: The Lord is your keeper;

**All: The Lord is your shade**

**All: On your right hand.**

L: The sun shall not smite you by day,

**All: Nor the moon by night.**

L: The Lord will keep you from all evil,

L: And will keep your life.

**All: The Lord will keep**

**All: Your going out and your coming in**

**All: From this time forth and for evermore.**

\*Hymn #384      Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Scripture              Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

Prayer

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.

\*Hymn #292      What Wondrous Love Is This

Scripture              John 3:1-17

Choir Anthem      “All I Am”  
William Himes

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

Message              From Above  
Pastor Wesley George

Communion

\*Hymn #389      Freely, Freely

\*Benediction

\*Postlude              “Faith Eternal”  
Edward Broughton

## *From Above*

### **Scripture: John 3:1-17**

**3** Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup> What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." <sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup> If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

### **Questions**

1. Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus at night?
2. Why did Nicodemus have such trouble understanding what Jesus was saying?
3. What does Jesus mean when he says you must "be born from above"?

### **Background**

Related Scriptures: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 4; 1 Timothy 2:1-4

Teachers would often teach at night because individuals had to work during the day, but John is doing more than providing historical detail, he is revealing Nicodemus' ignorance by equating it with darkness.

**Athanasius:** Once the likeness painted on a panel has been effaced by stains from outside itself, the one whose likeness it is needs to come once more to enable the portrait to be renewed on the same wood. And, for the sake of his picture, even the mere wood on which it is painted is not thrown away, but the outline is renewed upon it. In the same way, the most holy Son of the Father, being the image of the Father, came to our world to renew humankind once made in his likeness. He came to find such lost individuals by the remission of their sins. He says as much himself in the Gospels: "I came to find and to save the lost." This is why he also said to the Jews, "Except one be born again," not meaning, as they thought, birth from a woman, but speaking of the soul born and created anew in the likeness of God's image<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Joel C. Elowsky, ed., *John 1–10*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 110.

## *From Above*

### **Reflection**

Nicodemus' questions seem very legitimate to me. Not only how can a person be born a second time but why would a Jew, who was born into God's family need to be born a second time. Why would anyone who was born into God's chosen people need a second birth. Even if Nicodemus understood the double meaning of Jesus' statement (born again- a second time & born from above) it still would not have made sense. Even today when we talk about being born again, we mean being born into God's family. But the Jews saw themselves as God's chosen family so what can this mean? Nicodemus is saying to Jesus, "I've already been born into God's family, why should I have to repeat the process and have my mother give birth to me a second time." Nicodemus is trying to point out he already views himself as born into God's family.

Jesus though is trying to get Nicodemus to see something beyond blood. Jesus wants us to think more deeply about what it means to be family. Nicodemus thinks his connection to God comes from his birthright; Jesus wants him to see that his connection to God comes from God. Jesus wants him to recognize it is not enough simply to be connected to the right people, he must be connected to God. In saying this Jesus is echoing the Old Testament prophets who looked forward to the day when God's Spirit would dwell in humanity in a unique way. Jesus is telling Nicodemus the day longed for by the prophets had come. A day when God's Spirit would be poured out on all people in a new way.

Nicodemus (Who probably had a close relationship with God) attributed that to his association with God's people instead of his desire to pursue God's Spirit (the reason he ultimately sought out Jesus). Jesus was trying to get Nicodemus to see that it is he needed to reject his earthly DNA to accept the Divine DNA that had already begun to work in him. Nicodemus needed to distance himself from the idea that his natural birth put in into a right relationship with God and begin to grasp that it was his desire to be like God and allow God's Spirit to work in him that made him part of God's family.

Updating this for today, we might say it is not simply a connection to a local church that makes us part of God's family, it is our desire to be like God. Jesus wants us to understand that he came to save sinners (John 3:16-17) but the salvation is demonstrated through us living out life in the Spirit. He wants us to understand that God loves us so much that we have life in the Spirit opened up to us, and that accepting this is eternal life. But he wants us to see that life in the Spirit changes us to be more like the Spirit. Just as we grow into the likeness of the family we are born into on earth, so when we are born in the Spirit we begin to grow into the likeness of the Spirit. Being born anew, or from above, is about living in the new family. Just like being part of any other family, it is about learning the culture of the family, reflecting the traits of the family, and learning to love the family.

I am sure Nicodemus understood that he needed to love God's family, but what needed to change was his perspective on who made up God's family and how one entered it. This is why John 3:16-17 has such resonance in the passage. Nicodemus understands that God's family is a small group of people united by birth. Jesus though wants him (and us) to understand that God's love is not so limited. God loves the entire world and desire to see everyone enter eternal life (1 Tim 2:3-4). Nicodemus is shown that God's family is extensive and not limited to one specific group. But he is also shown that the small group he thinks of as God's family is not necessarily part of the family. Rather, he is given the picture that God's true family are the ones who love like God does in John 3:16-17, since they are the ones who reflect their father. If we are going to call ourselves part of God's family we need to also take this to heart. It is when we reflect the love of God and the qualities of Jesus that we demonstrate we have been born in the Spirit. Being born again (from above) is not simply about a specific event it is about a lifetime of learning how to recognize God's family and how to live in it.

Sisters and Brothers,

We have reached Lent and as I think about Scripture I can think of no better time to read the Book of Psalms. Several years I have found great help in reading a Psalm a Day during the season of Lent. Often, I simply pick some of my favorite Psalms and read one a day. But sometimes I can be more deliberate and read them in an order. The Psalms are some of the most passionate parts of the Bible, exploring the breadth of emotions and how we communicate with God. The Psalms root us in how we meet God in the real world. Yes, some of the wording seems dated but the feeling is timeless and praying through them helps gives words to our deep-rooted feelings.

During the month of March, I want to encourage you to read Psalms. If you are like me, it will be one Psalm a day. You may want to start at Psalm 1 or you may want to jump around hitting popular Psalms like 42, 51, 100, 121. And if you are especially motivated you can try to read through the book in a month. A reading schedule for this is on a separate page.

No matter which of these exercises you choose, the point remains the same, to help you understand where you connect to God and where you need God. The Psalms are about helping us deepen our appreciation for life by helping us understand what we feel and articulate that to God. And so, over the next few weeks I hope you take the time to encounter the Psalms and through them God.

Blessings,

Pastor Wesley

## Through the Psalms in a Month

	<u>Morning</u>	<u>Evening</u>
Day 1	Psalms 1-5	6-8
Day 2	9-11	12-14
Day 3	15-17	18
Day 4	19-21	22-23
Day 5	24-26	27-29
Day 6	30-31	32-34
Day 7	35-36	37
Day 8	38-40	41-43
Day 9	44-46	47-49
Day 10	50-52	53-55
Day 11	56-58	59-61
Day 12	62-64	65-67
Day 13	68	69-70
Day 14	71-72	73-74
Day 15	75-77	78
Day 16	79-81	82-85
Day 17	86-88	89
Day 18	90-92	93-94
Day 19	95-97	98-101
Day 20	102-103	104
Day 21	105	106
Day 22	107	108-109
Day 23	110-113	114-115
Day 24	116-118	119: 1-32
Day 25	119: 33-72	119: 73-104
Day 26	119:105-144	119: 145-176
Day 27	120-125	126-131
Day 28	132-135	136-138
Day 29	139-140	141-143
Day 30	144-146	147-150

# This Week at Dover First UMC

## Sunday

10:20 a.m.    Worship Service  
                    Communion

## Next Sunday

**Daylight Savings Time Begins  
Spring Forward!**

10:20 a.m.    Worship Service

## Monday

No Events

## Tuesday

6:30 p.m.

Book Study

7 p.m.

WMM Church  
Spanish-Speaking

7 p.m.

Boy Scouts  
Scout Room

## Wednesday

5:30 p.m.

Girl Scouts  
Fellowship Hall

6 p.m.

Friends in  
Fellowship  
Lounge

6:30 p.m.

Cub Scouts  
Education Zone

7 p.m.

Choir  
Rehearsal

## Thursday

7 p.m.

Grief Share  
Lounge

7 p.m.

WMM Church  
Spanish-Speaking

7 p.m.

Scout Leaders

## Friday

No Events

## Saturday

10 a.m.

Craft and Chat  
Lounge

1 p.m.

Private Party  
Fellowship Hall

