



**December 9, 2022**

Join us for worship online or in-person.  
Sunday morning worship begins @ 10: 20 a.m.



**Pastor Wesley George**

## *From Our Pastor*

Brothers & Sisters,

I'm sitting in my office putting together a Christmas playlist and thinking about how Methodists used to be known for their singing and music. We were built on the hymns of Charles Wesley, these were our primary way of teaching our beliefs and sharing our vision with others. This came to my mind because I often find it difficult to find truly great Christmas music. I frequently hear that music is an expression of our "soul"; it is an avenue where people can understand what we think and feel. If this is the case then to me it shows how hollow Christmas is in our society and frankly even the Christian music is not much better. Every year I remark to Sue that it sounds like the same ten songs sung over and over in slightly different styles by different people. To me this is another symptom of people going through the motions at Christmas, they do not sit and meditate on the season and the coming of Jesus, the music, like so much else in the season, has not touched them deeply.

I do not want to disparage your favorite Christmas albums because there are good ones (I am always up to hear about good Christmas music if you have some). But like our symbols and traditions our music points to what we think and believe about Christmas. Christmas should be a time saturated in sacred tradition and reminders of Jesus' birth and reign in this world. I hope this comes out in the Advent devotional we are offering, our traditions are about weaving Jesus' birth into the daily routine of our lives. Our choice of music during this time likewise is meant to help us focus on Jesus and his reign, it is meant to work on our subconscious drilling deep into our hearts, filling our minds with concepts like peace, love, joy, and hope.

I want to encourage each of you to make music a large part of your Christmas celebration because it does work deeply in us teaching and changing us. You might not be someone who typically listens to music or you might have difficulty feeling festive during Christmas, but you can still find music to comfort you during this season. Yes, I started by lamenting the lack of quality Christmas songs, but there are still several good ones and they are not that hard to find, what is important is that when you find them to allow them to work deeply on you, learning them and meditating on their meaning.

Have a Blessed Advent Season,

*Pastor Wesley*



# *Advent*

## **Services and Events**

**Dover First United Methodist Church**

**Church Christmas Breakfast**

**December 18th at 9 a.m.**

**Blue Christmas**

**Service of Hope and Remembrance**

**December 20th at 6:30 p.m.**

**Christmas Eve Service with Candlelight**

**Music begins at 6:30 and service at 7**

**Christmas Day Service with Christmas Music**

**Service begins at 10:20**

**New Year's Day Service**

**Service begins at 10:20 a.m.**



## **Church Family Christmas Breakfast**

**Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m.**

**Please Sign Up in the Lobby**

**Enjoy a delicious breakfast and fellowship time  
with the church family and guests.**

**Menu: Ham, Hash Browns,  
Scrambled Eggs, Fruit, Juice and Rolls**

**Love offering baskets will be available.**

**Helping hands are needed for clean up after breakfast.  
Please sign up in the lobby if you can help.**



# Christmas Card EXCHANGE

## **Sharing Our Christmas Greetings**

**The Dover First UMC Family is invited to share holiday greetings with church members living locally.**

**Cards can be dropped off and picked up using our decorated boxes located in the lobby.**

**Be sure to check the boxes each week.**

**A great way to save time and money while sharing the joy of the Christmas Season.**

# After Worship *Reflections* LifeGroup

## **Reflections LifeGroup**

Let's take a deeper look at  
Sunday's scriptures and message.

**After the Worship Service from  
11:30 to Noon in Room #2 (Education Zone)**

Please sign up in the lobby.

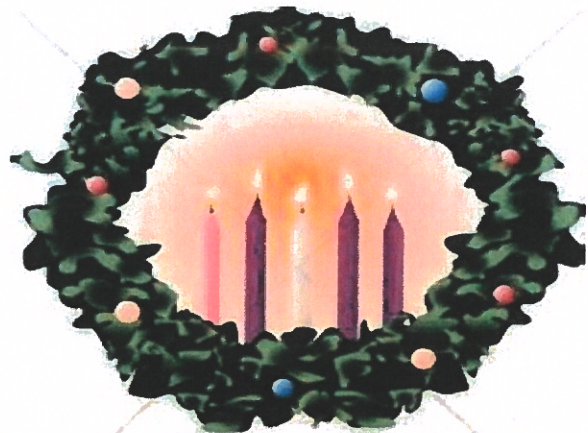
## **Why We Decorate:**

**An Advent Devotional by Pastor Wesley George**

Available on our website at [doverfirst.org](http://doverfirst.org)

For an emailed copy,  
contact the church office  
at [doverfirst@gmail.com](mailto:doverfirst@gmail.com)

Not online?  
Printed copies are  
available in the lobby.



**Advent**

# Blue Christmas

**A Service of  
Remembrance and Hope**

**Dover First United  
Methodist Church  
Sanctuary  
and Online  
[doverfirst.org](http://doverfirst.org)**

**December 20th  
at 6:30 p.m.**

**1725 N. Wooster Ave.  
Dover, Ohio**





## **Confirmation Class Breakfast Break**

Let's make confirmation extra-special by providing a dozen donuts or other baked treats for our Sunday morning Confirmation Class!

**\*Sign up in the lobby to choose a date\***

Bring your treats to classroom #7 before 9 a.m.

Our confirmands would love to meet you.

You can also drop off in the church kitchen on Friday.

## **Youth Group Christmas Ornament Fundraiser**

Ornaments will arrive during the second week of December and can be picked up in the lobby on Sundays or weekdays in the office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Just \$10



Created by Warther Woodworking





**Enjoy Food, Fellowship  
and a Different Program Each Month**

For Adults of All Ages

# **Glowing Embers**

**Monday, December 19th  
Beginning at 5:30 p.m.**

## **Menu**

Lasagna, Salad, Bread and Dessert

## **Program**

A Special Christmas Guest!

Please sign up in the lobby by **Dec. 12th.**  
The cost is \$13 per person.

# **Kidz Min**

Enjoy fun, friendship and a special  
time of worship just for you!

Children grades K thru 5th are invited.  
Meet at the back of the sanctuary  
on Sunday mornings during  
the second hymn and a teacher  
will walk to class with you.

*Kidz Min will not meet on the 1st Sunday of each month.*



# **Kidz Min Plus**

Explore the Worship Arts With Us!  
Children grades K and Up are Invited!

Dive into skits, music, movement,  
dance and instruments on  
Sunday mornings from 11:30 to noon



## **Dover First UMC Is Reaching Out at the Dover-New Phila Food Panty**

**Volunteers are Needed on the 4th Thursday  
of Each Month from 4:30 and 8 p.m.**

**Sign up in the lobby or by contacting the church office:  
doverfirst@gmail.com or (330) 343-1322**

***Let's work together to end food insecurity  
and hunger in our community!***

**[greaterdover-newphiladelphiafoodpantry.com](http://greaterdover-newphiladelphiafoodpantry.com)**

**Invite your family, friends, small group, class or team.**

**Face coverings are optional and available if needed.**



Special Music      “One Small Child “  
Words and Music by David Meese  
Annette Woods, Soloist

Offering Introduction/Doxology #95/Prayer/Lord’s Prayer

Message            A Season for Joy  
Pastor Wesley George

\*Hymn #224        “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

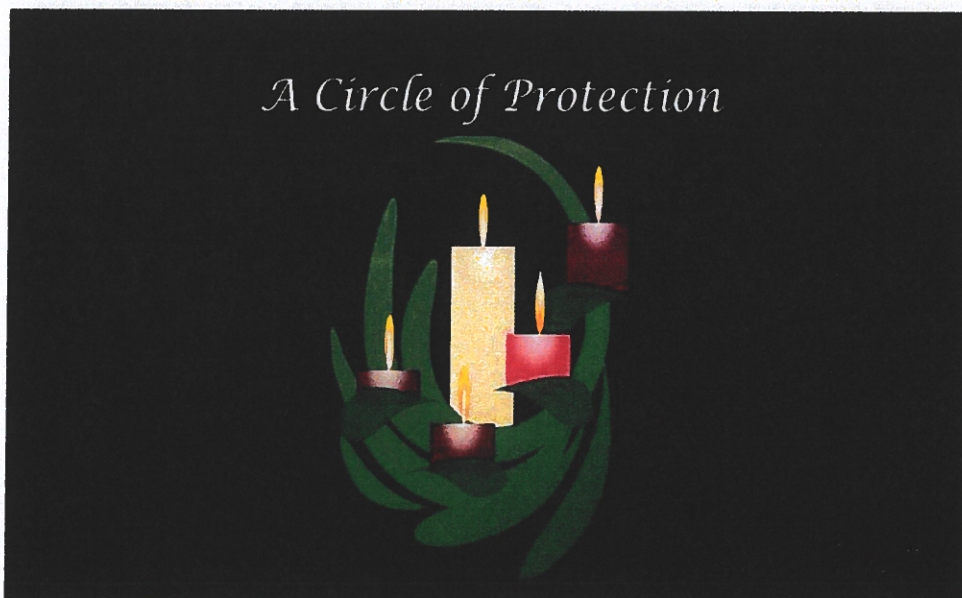
\*Benediction

\*Postlude          “Hark! The Glad Sound”  
arr. Michael Burkhardt

---

**Joining Us for the First Time or Have Questions?**

We invite you to visit the Welcome Center in the lobby  
or speak with one of our greeting team members  
wearing a blue lanyard and name tag.



## *A Season for Joy*

### **Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20**

- <sup>14</sup> Rejoice, Daughter Zion! Shout, Israel!  
Rejoice and exult with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem.
- <sup>15</sup> The Lord has removed your judgment;  
he has turned away your enemy.  
The Lord, the king of Israel, is in your midst;  
you will no longer fear evil.
- <sup>16</sup> On that day, it will be said to Jerusalem:  
Don't fear, Zion.  
Don't let your hands fall.
- <sup>17</sup> The Lord your God is in your midst—a warrior bringing victory.  
He will create calm with his love;  
he will rejoice over you with singing.
- <sup>18</sup> I will remove from you those worried about the appointed feasts.  
They have been a burden for her, a reproach.
- <sup>19</sup> Watch what I am about to do to all your oppressors at that time.  
I will deliver the lame;  
I will gather the outcast.  
I will change their shame into praise and fame throughout the earth.
- <sup>20</sup> At that time, I will bring all of you back,  
at the time when I gather you.  
I will give you fame and praise among all the neighboring peoples  
when I restore your possessions and you can see them—says the Lord.

### **Theme- We are to rejoice in God's salvation**

#### **Questions**

1. What does it look like for God to rejoice and why I God rejoicing in this passage when God is the one acting and Israel is passive?
2. Verse 18 seems to read like God is removing the people who grieve from the community, how should this verse be understood, how can we be considerate of those who grieve?
3. How do Christians rejoice when life seems hard, and the world seems most opposed to us?

#### **Helpful Information**

Related passages: Is. 52z;7-10, Zech. 9:9, Lk. 24:52,

V18 seems to indicate when it comes time to rejoice God will remove anyone from the congregation who refuses to rejoice.

The structure of the passage moves from positive command (do) for Israel to description of God then a negative command (do not) back to a description of how God will act.

The call to rejoice is based on who God is, king and warrior and what God has done, removed guilt shame and judgment.

## *A Season for Joy*

### **Reflection**

One of the differences between the Christian approach to Advent and the American “Christmas season” is attitude. For Americans the “Christmas season” is about being festive and merry, continually spreading cheer up to the day you get your presents. Despite this festive nature (or perhaps because of it) this season is also marked by a sharp uptick in depression and other mental health issues. Advent though was always meant to be more contemplative; it is a time of preparation including sorting out the complexities of our life. There are times of grief and sorrow built into the Advent season as well as the third Sunday a time of joy. Every year I hear someone ask about the pink candle on the advent wreath and I remind that person it is because it represents joy. Where every other Sunday in Advent might be positive or negative based on how you experience the world and your level of preparedness for Jesus, the third Sunday is a call to rejoice no matter the situation. The third Sunday of Advent is a time to forget ourselves and our world and focus on what the world will be when Jesus returns, and God fully establishes the Divine kingdom.

I am well aware that there are times that people do not feel like celebrating because of the difficulties they face in life, but the call to joy is a call to look beyond ourselves and focus on the larger picture. Zephaniah points to this reality, for the first two and a half chapters of his book he discusses the sin of Judah, the inevitable coming destruction, and here at the end of the book he switches gears and calls on the people to rejoice. Yes, the prophet is looking forward to a time after with the destruction in which the people will rejoice, but he is also calling on the people of Judah at that time to rejoice. The call for rejoicing is set in the future and in God's future events but it is meant for the people of Zephaniah's day to join in it's over Joyce it. It is by rejoicing despite the suffering that the people of Judah and Jerusalem will identify themselves with God and their desire to participate in God's salvation. “The experience of deliverance and the anticipation of salvation provide the most significant occasions for rejoicing among the people of God in the OT.”<sup>1</sup> Even though Judah has not seen the salvation of God Zephaniah wants them to identify themselves with the people who will be saved. But Zephaniah's hearers were not called to rejoice simply to placate an unworthy God, we see that God desires to rejoice over the salvation of the people. Zephaniah shows us that God will save those people who are the victims of injustice and will rejoice in doing so. Rejoicing that is one of the markers that distinguishes those who desire to share in God's justice from those who are apostate.

Is that they are able to step outside of their own discomfort and hurt, even if only temporarily, to rejoice in the salvation that God plans to bring. These individuals recognize that they are the recipients of God's love and grace, and that status transcends the temporary hurt. At the midpoint of this advent season, we recognize but there is much to rejoice about, God this is bringing justice and salvation and we are the recipients of these good things. We celebrate Jesus's birth as the pledge of great things to come. But we look forward to Jesus's second coming and rejoice in the completion of our salvation any institution of God's righteousness in this world. the ability to rejoice this advent goes beyond the fevered pitch of the American Christmas season and reveals our ability to look beyond ourselves at what God is doing in the world. Rejoicing displays our commitment to following God into a future salvation despite our current circumstances.

---

<sup>1</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, “Joy,” *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 1022.