



Dover First UMC's Weekly Newsletter April 3, 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
for online services,
special studies,
announcements,
opportunities to serve,
and the church calendar
and ways to give.

Holy Week Reflection Pastor Wesley George

When the early Church looked for ways to understand Jesus' Resurrection they turned to the Psalms. One of these was Psalm 110.

The Lord says to my lord,

"Sit at my right hand

until I make your enemies your footstool."

We celebrate that the lord sits at the right hand of God and reigns over earth. This is a time to meditate what it means for me to live under Jesus' authority and to be governed by him.

What Psalm is your favorite and why?

He is Risen



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 to learn more.

Easter Sunday at Dover First UMC

Church Family Breakfast

Enjoy a Delicious Breakfast
in Fellowship Hall at 9 a.m.

Please sign up in the lobby.

Easter Breakfast



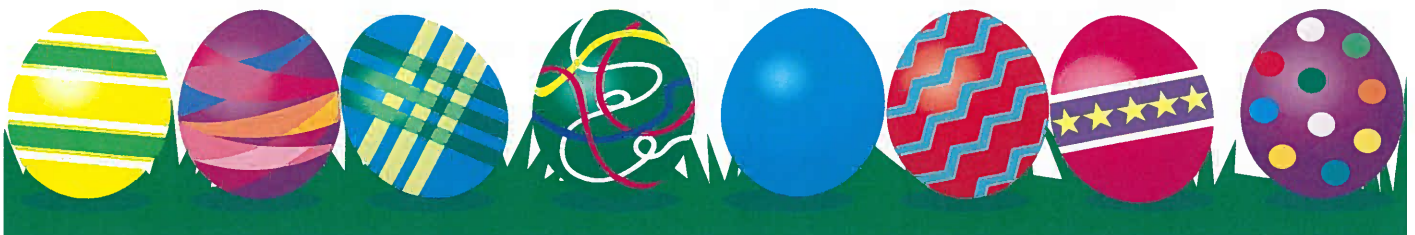
Easter Sunday Service Begins at 10:20 a.m.

Celebrating Our Savior's
Resurrection in the
Sanctuary with Scripture,
an Easter Message
and Special Music.

He is Risen!

Egg Hunt After the Easter Sunday Service

All children are invited to stay after the service
to find colorful plastic eggs filled with goodies.



The Food Pantry of Dover-New Phila

422 W. Third Street
Dover, OH 44622



The local food pantry is open twice each week for all in need of food from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday 9 a.m. to Noon on Friday.

Home delivery is also available for the homebound and those unable to come to the pantry. Call (330) 649-2228 for info.

Do you or someone that you know need emergency food assistance today, please call (234) 801-8198.

The pantry is an all volunteer organization and many more volunteers are needed to distribute food at the pantry, as well as deliver food to our neighbors unable to come in:
Thursday 4:30 to 8 p.m. and Friday 8:30 a.m. to Noon
Drivers are needed on Thursday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

For additional information, visit the pantry website at:
dovernpfoodpantry.org or call (234) 801-8198

Community Men's Fellowship Breakfast

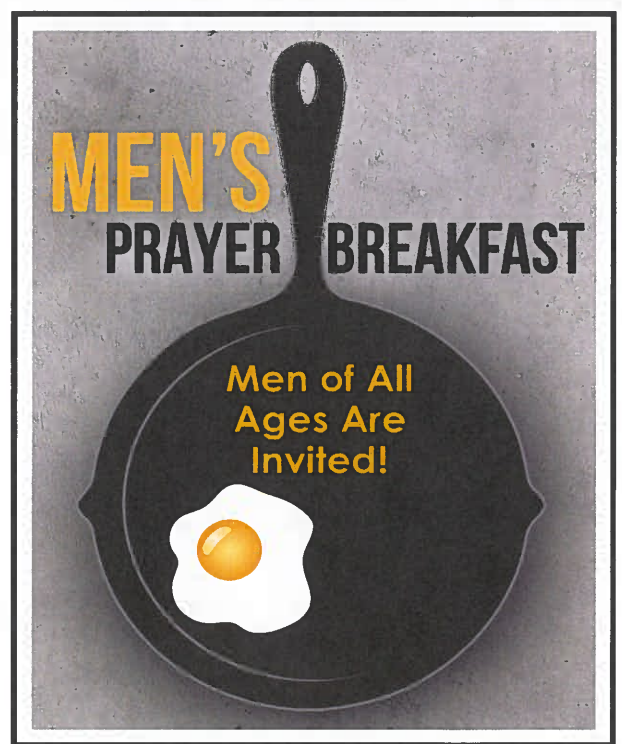
Men of all ages are invited for breakfast, prayer and fellowship each month at a different church from 9 to 11 a.m.

April 18

Salvation Army
809 Emmett Ave NW
New Phila

May 16

St. John's UCC
409 N. Wooster Ave
Dover





Welcome to Worship
Easter Sunday
April 5, 2026

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude “The Holy City”
 arr. Robert W. Thygerson

Call to Worship Psalm 118:19-24

L: Open to me the gates of righteousness,

L: That I may enter through them

L: And give thanks to the Lord.

A: This is the gate of the Lord;

A: The righteous shall enter through it.

L: I thank you that you have answered me

L: And have become my salvation.

A: The stone which builders rejected

A: Has become the cornerstone.

L: This is the Lord's doing;

L: It is marvelous in our eyes.

A: This is the day which the Lord has made;

A: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

*Hymn #302 Christ The Lord Is Risen Today

Scripture	Acts 10:34-43
Prayer	
Choir Anthem	<p>“A Festive Introit for Easter” Words by Nancy Price and Don Besig Music by Don Besig Mitch Warden, trumpet</p>
*Hymn #314	<p>In The Garden (I Come to the Garden Alone)</p>
Scripture	John 20:1-18
Choir Anthem	<p>“The Resurrection and the Life” Words by Lloyd Larson, Matthew Bridges and Samuel Medley arr. Lloyd Larson Mitch Warden, trumpet</p> <p>This anthem was donated in loving memory of Bonnie Swihart by her ‘Birthday Bunch’ friends</p>
*Offering Introduction/Doxology/Prayer/Lord’s Prayer	
Message	<p>The First Witness Pastor Wesley George</p>
*Hymn #322	Up From The Grave He Arose
*Benediction	
*Postlude	<p>“Christ is Risen, Alleluia!” arr. Albin C. Whitworth</p>

The First Witness

Scripture: John 20:1-18

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴ The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹² and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Questions

1. Why Does Mary linger at the Tomb?

Background

Related Scriptures: John 10:1-18; Acts 10:34-43

Gregory the Great: Mary Magdalene, who had been a sinner in the city, loved the Truth and so washed away with her tears the stains of wickedness. Her sins had kept her cold, but afterward she burned with an irresistible love.... When even the disciples departed from the sepulcher, she did not depart. She looked for him whom she had not found.... But it is not enough for a lover to have looked once, because the force of love intensifies the effort of the search. She looked for him a first time and found nothing. She persevered in seeking, and that is why she found him. As her unfulfilled desires increased, they took possession of what they found. ... Holy desires, as I have told you before, increase by delay in their fulfillment. If delay causes them to fail, they were not desires.... This was Mary's kind of love as she turned a second time to the sepulcher she had already looked into. Let us see the result of her search, which had been redoubled by the power of love.¹

¹ Joel C. Elowsky, ed., *John 11-21*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 343.

The First Witness

Reflection

Reading John's Gospel I am struck by the differences between this account of the Resurrection and those in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The other three Gospels speak about a group of women going to the tomb, John only mentions Mary. The others have the angels provide a message to the women for the disciples, in John Mary encounters Jesus himself. In the other Gospels the disciples seem hesitant to believe, in John they readily accept Mary's words and rush to the tomb and believe. To me John's account reads like a first-hand account about an individual while the other accounts seem to focus on the group. These accounts differ but they are not irreconcilable, they simply promote different stories for different reasons. And when we respect the different stories, we can come away with a deep appreciation for them and a deepened desire for relationship with the risen Jesus. These stories are not contradictions they are ways of highlighting different elements of the encounters the early Christians had with the risen Jesus.

John's retelling of the story omits the group of women and embalming spices and instead focuses on Mary's grief and love for Jesus. Not that the group or their duty is unimportant but because when he focuses on Mary alone we can see how Jesus' death impacted Jesus' followers personally. It is Mary's love that compels her to visit the grave. It is not simply a duty that compels her to visit it is her desire to be close to Jesus much like how we visit the graves of loved ones. John does this to help us understand what it means to be a disciple, Mary's love for Jesus is so great that she risks being identified with him after he has been condemned for treason. Being a disciple of Jesus is about identifying with him when it is difficult. It is Mary's love that causes her to linger by the tomb when the others had gone away. It is in this level of devotion that Mary sets herself apart. She remains at the grave when all others are gone. And it is because of her devotion that Jesus himself appears to her first. Jesus rewards the diligence Mary has shown.

What I love about this is that Mary does not recognize Jesus until he speaks this echoes back to Jesus' words that he is the good shepherd and "the sheep follow him because they know his voice." (John 10:1-18). Further it is the disciple who Jesus loves who enters the tomb sees the folding burial shroud and leaves believing before he saw (cf John 20:29). John is trying to highlight that those who seek Jesus find Jesus. It might be tempting to think that Jesus was just playing favorites with two disciples but his words to Mary show us otherwise. He tells her not to hold on to him because he needs to make himself available to all. He needs to ascend in order to send the Holy Spirit and to be connected with all believers. He is telling Mary that she cannot cling to him but must allow others to find him as well. She must give others the chance to encounter the risen Lord the way she has. But then even more she must proclaim the risen Lord she has encountered. Mary must proclaim her story to the disciples and to all who will listen. She is to become the first witness to Jesus' new life telling the world what she has seen and the relationship that is open to them.

Mary became the first witness to Jesus but certainly not the last. For centuries people have been encountering the risen Lord. Every person is given the opportunity to hear Mary's message and to seek for Jesus. And many seek and find Jesus, they hear his voice and follow. These are the ones who find their fulfillment in life and then like Mary share their encounter with Jesus inviting others to follow the same path toward the risen savior.

Sisters and Brothers,

Over the last several weeks I have been preaching in John's Gospel because that is where the lectionary is. It has triggered in me a desire to work through the Gospel more slowly. So for the month of April I will be reading a chapter a day and I invite you to join with me in this exercise. John's Gospel is 21 chapters long so even if you start tomorrow there is still enough time in April that you can divide some of the longer chapters if you need to. The goal is to read slower and focus on the message.

John's Gospel is wonderfully robust and every time I read it I come away with something more. As one theologian said, "John is like water shallow enough for a baby to play in while deep enough for an elephant to drown." It is easy yet offers great depth for those who are looking. Be aware that John often uses words with multiple meanings to illuminate multiple messages simultaneously.

As we approach the book this April I will be focused on the themes of the Spirit. What is the Spirit's role in our world. What does life mean for Jesus. And what does Jesus' new command of loving one another look like in my daily life. I encourage you to ask questions and discuss the book with others. John is certainly a book that benefits us more when we read it in community.

Blessings,

Pastor Wesley

Celebrating Our Savior's Resurrection!



Easter Sunday

- 9 a.m. Church Family
Breakfast
Fellowship Hall
Please Sign Up
- 10:20 a.m. Worship Service
Sanctuary
Nursery Available
- 11:30 a.m. Egg Hunt
Church Lawn
or Indoors for
Inclement Weather

Next Sunday

- 10:20 a.m. Worship Service
with Communion

Monday

Church Offices Closed
Staff Holiday

- 10:30 a.m. Women's Study

Tuesday

- 7 p.m. WMM Church
Spanish-Speaking
- 7 p.m. Boy Scouts
Scout Room

Wednesday

- 6:30 p.m. Cub Scouts
Education Zone
- 7 p.m. Choir
Rehearsal

Thursday

- 1:30 p.m. Book Club
- 7 p.m. Grief Share
Lounge
- 7 p.m. WMM Church
Spanish-Speaking

Friday No Events

Saturday No Events