



THE NEW DOVER HERALD

June 2020

Vol. 168

A Ministry Newsletter of New Dover United Methodist Church

CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

Saints,

Grace to you, peace...

The following was taken from a May 10th article posted online...

Members of a Calgary church ravaged by COVID-19 are sharing their stories of grief and healing after Alberta's chief medical health officer cited them as a cautionary tale... *"They followed all the rules and did nothing wrong."* Despite that, 24 of the 41 people (at a birthday party hosted by the church) ended up infected. Two of them died.

Rev. Shannon Mang is the minister of Living Spirit United Church: *"One of our most beloved members was having a very important birthday and we wanted to celebrate that. Under the circumstances, we thought we were going to be safe. We were very diligent about physical distancing, very diligent about hand hygiene."* Though the church has capacity for 200 people, fewer than 50 were at the event - well within the public health rules of the time. Food was served but everyone handling it wore gloves.

"We were very careful and then a week later, we learned of the first person who was diagnosed with COVID-19," explained Rev. Mang. *"A few days later we had the second, and the third and within a week there were about 14. Within two weeks, there were 24 of the 41 people who had been there that day. The overwhelming emotion was shock."*

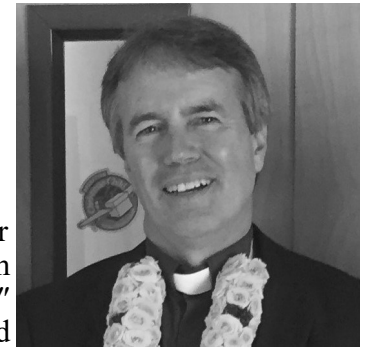
Shannon Morey attends the church with her mom and dad and all three were at the party that day. She never got sick, but both of her parents did. *"My mom thought she had a sinus infection, then a day later my dad thought he had a cold."* Her father Dennis was admitted to the hospital on April 3 and the ICU two days later. Three weeks after that, he died. He was 81 but, according to his family, still very active. Other church members organized a vigil in his memory with more than 100 people dropping off candles outside his house, one at a time. The church also held online wakes for members who died, allowing the community to grieve virtually.

"It's really tough," Rev. Mang said. *"We were working with the information that we had at the time, but I would do anything for a do-over. It's very, very hard to live with this reality."* Mang says the church has been devastated by the aftermath of the infection spreading among members and she wants others to learn from their experience.

"We don't want another organization or faith community to go through what we've been through," said Mang. *"It's really, really hard. There seems to be this huge divide between those who've experienced (COVID-19) and the majority who haven't. If you haven't experienced it, you are so lucky. You have no idea how fortunate you are."*

While reading this article I experienced two emotions. Deep sadness of course for Rev. Mang and the people of her church, one similar to our own in terms of size. But also a deep sense of gratitude to the Church Council of New Dover and the wisdom they exhibited at the moment we sensed the threat of Covid-19. I thought all of you should know what happened, so here's the story...

We were all set to have church the weekend of March 14th and 15th when Patrick Kingsly, our council chair, called us together that Saturday morning. It was short notice but nearly every council member showed up. At that point the numbers were not all that scary- only 2,200 US cases had been reported (about 1/500th of what they are now), but epidemiologists and health care workers were sounding the alarm with dire warnings that the virus was



about to explode and imploring people not to gather in groups. After about 15 minutes of discussion, the New Dover Church Council voted unanimously to cancel live worship that weekend and at least until the end of March. We then assigned each member a list of church members to contact informing them of our decision, and we immediately began that task.

Sometimes when something *doesn't happen* we pay it little mind. But I believe that the wise foresight of our Church Council and the courageous decision they made on that Saturday morning in March saved our church from suffering a fate similar to that of the church in Calvary.

Saints, as we go forward through this pandemic, we're often tempted to throw caution to the wind and get back to our "normal" routines as quickly as possible. But to do so is to risk not only the lives of our church members, but also those of our family members, neighbors, colleagues, and friends. As followers of Jesus Christ, we know that we are to place even one precious human life above our collective desire to cure cabin fever! And as much as I'd love to see all of you sitting in those pews on Saturday night and Sunday morning, I can wait for the sake of our lives and the bright future God has yet planned for us!

In the meantime, thanks for your prayers, for tuning into our virtual services, for your donations of food and masks, your volunteer hours, for looking in on one another, and for your unbending financial support of our ministry! Have a blessed June.

Keep on keeping the faith,

Rev Chuck

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Financial News

Thank you for your continued financial support during the Covid-19 pandemic. Enclosed in this newsletter are 2 self-addressed envelopes for you to use to mail in your contributions or you can use our online option by going to www.newdoverumc.org and give.

Below are the financial numbers for the month of March 2020.

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Gross Income | \$14,322.57 |
| Expense | 25,230.98 |
| Net Income (Loss) | \$10,908.41 |

KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Boyce Family | Mary Ellen Anglin | &uninsured |
| Judy Tymitz | Manny & Nora De La Paz | Evelyn Millard |
| Tom Crouse | Sandra De Alwis | Robin & Carolyn DeCicco |
| Bonner family | Fran Livecchia | Liam Dalton |
| Pat & Brian & Family | Cancer patients | Calvin Christian |
| Aaron Christie | Service men & women | Tonya Burleigh |
| Dianne & Herb Petersen | Veterans | All affected by Covid-19 |
| Parkhill Family | Homeless, unemployed | and their families |

Pray for all those affected by Natural Disasters, those suffering with addictions, those suffering from depression, Victims of terrorism & violence, all national leaders, and all those serving at New Dover UMC.

All doctors, nurses, EMT, teachers, grocery store workers, janitors, and all other frontline workers. Thank you and God Bless.

Steady
by David A. Redding

Steady me
Now, my Father
With faith that goes
A little farther
Into the night.
Brace my belief,
Make me a good traveler
In rough waters,
So this trouble
I'm having
Will not seem like
The last straw,
Only a mean time.
Show me how to let
My grief
Open up for faith-
Wide enough for the sky
to fall in,
Full of
God.

Amen

Submitted by Prayer Fellowship Group

SERMON OF THE MONTH

“Testing God in the Wilderness Never Ends Well”

(Preached on Sunday, May 3, 2020)

Psalm 106:6-15; Matthew 4:5-7

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, *“He will command his angels concerning you”, and “On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.”* Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written, *“Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”*’

Things in New Jersey are finally beginning to open up a bit. State and county parks, beaches, boardwalks, golf courses (yea!). It feels good to stretch our legs out a bit, doesn't it? But some states have gone farther haven't they? Way, way farther...

The governor of Georgia has declared that some of what *he* calls “*essential business*” are now open to the public including gyms, bowling alleys, hair and nail salons, tattoo parlors, massage parlors, and.....*wait for it.....*churches! So while it's nice to know we're labeled “essential” in Georgia, it does take us back a bit to be lumped in with tattoo and massage parlors!

So churches are legally permitted to be open for worship in Georgia and a few other states as well, and while that may seem like a good thing, given the current state of our pandemic there are quite a few people who vehemently disagree with the governor's declaration. But what's surprising is that while many of them are virologists, epidemiologists, and health care professionals, a great deal of them are actually clergy! Yes, **the majority of church leaders in Georgia and other states are actually opposed to opening the churches for worship!** Despite the governmental go-ahead to resume services, most churches remain committed to live-streaming or drive-through services. Listen to the words of the church leaders themselves:

The Catholic Dioceses in Georgia said that it is “*not authorizing the return to congregating at churches or making our churches available for devotions*” through May. A prelate of the AME Church, issued a directive to more than 520 churches Tuesday prohibiting gatherings for services on Sunday, calling the governor's decision “unacceptable.” President Anthony Booker of The Baptist Ministries Conference of Augusta urged residents to heed warnings from medical experts and stay home, saying “*I'd rather preach over you living, than preach over you dead.*” And what about us United Methodists you might ask? Where do we stand on the governor's decision? Well the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church is advising churches not to gather through at least May 13 “*as we do our best to do no harm.*” Good to see John Wesley actually doing something positive in Georgia (inside Methodist joke- Google it)!

Now I know what some of you are thinking- “*I thought most churches in the south were defying the stay at home orders and holding worship.*” Not true! **The vast majority of churches, not to mention synagogues, temples, and mosques are adhering to social distancing recommendations and are holding virtual services.**

Of course there are the exceptions, and it's always the exceptions that get all the media attention, right? You've probably heard of the mega church in California that held services during the pandemic and is now linked to over a hundred cases of Covid-19 (that we know of). Or how about the evangelical pastor in Virginia who vowed to keep preaching to his packed church “*unless I'm in jail or the hospital.*” He told reporters “*I am essential, I'm a preacher — I talk to God!*” Well, a week after saying that he died of Covid-19.

But prime among the defiant has been one particular Pentecostal church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana led by a preacher named Tony Spell. He's made violating the 10 people or less rules a personal crusade, loves to refer to himself and his church as “*the persecuted,*” and has been on the news saying things like, “*We don't get our rights to worship freely from the government we get those from God. We are not afraid. We are called by God to stand against the Antichrist creeping into America's borders.*” Of course he

quotes scripture (out of context) like I Peter 3:14: “*But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated.*” Or Hebrews 10:24-25: “*And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some...*”

(It might behoove Mr. Spell to realize that when these words were written the first century the church was undergoing genuine, not manufactured persecution.)

In a recent sermon he said, “*Our church is a hospital where the sick can come and get healing... Cancers are healed here, people are healed of HIV in these services, and we believe that tonight, we’re also going to pass out anointed handkerchiefs to people who may have a fear, who may have a sickness, and we believe that when those anointed handkerchiefs go on them, that healing virtue is going to go on them as well.*” (I’m thinkin’ I gotta get me some of them there anointed handkerchiefs!) When asked how he would feel if some of his parishioners should catch the coronavirus and die, Spell replied, “*For truly religious people, death looks to them like a welcome friend. True Christians do not mind dying.*”

Now these might sound to some like genuine, heartfelt expressions of the Christian faith, but how do we reconcile that with the words of the religious leaders in Georgia and elsewhere who are preaching the exact opposite, and declaring that a true measure of our faith is to obey the stay-at-home order and find other ways to worship during the outbreak? Perhaps better questions are: Does the defiance of preachers who hold worship despite orders not to, help or hurt the church? Does it bring in new parishioners, or drive them away?

How about we take up the challenge from preachers like Tony Spell and others who seem to love the attention they’re getting and challenge them on “their own turf?” Let’s head to the scriptures! Does the Bible have something to say about such a debate? Well, it just so happens Jesus himself faced a similar choice in this morning’s New Testament passage from Matthew. In fact the duel between Jesus and the Devil in the Wilderness addresses this controversy perfectly.

We all know the story, right? Jesus, immediately after he was baptized was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to wrestle with the revelation that he was God’s anointed one (*messiah*). In the second of three temptations, the Devil takes Jesus to Jerusalem and places him on the pinnacle of the temple, “*saying to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down.’*” In other words, “*Hey Jesus, if you really want people to believe you’re the Messiah prove it to them!*” And then Satan quotes scripture, specifically Psalm 91: “*For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.*” (So you see, Tony Spell isn’t the only one who can quote scripture!) What was Satan up to? Well, he was testing Jesus to see just how far he could get with him. But it’s one thing to **quote** scripture, its quite another to **know** scripture, because if the Devil really **knew** his scriptures he would realize that **testing God in the wilderness never goes well!**

Had Satan instead read Psalm 95:8-11 his argument would have fallen through because there the psalmist writes, “*Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your ancestors tested me, and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. For forty years I loathed that generation and said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they do not regard my ways.’ Therefore in my anger I swore, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’*” Meribah (also called Massah) is the name given the place in the Wilderness where the Israelites complained to Moses about the lack of water, this despite the fact they had just been the beneficiaries of a number of truly miraculous events like the ten plagues, the dramatic escape from Egypt through the Red Sea, and the gift of manna from heaven. Moses pleaded with them, “**Why do you test the Lord?**” But God’s punishment for their lack of faith was that the current generation would not live to see the Promised Land.

It was in this context that Jesus cast aside the Devil’s challenge by quoting from Deuteronomy 6:16: “**Do not put the Lord your God to the test.**” You see Jesus knew exactly what the Devil was really asking him to do by putting him on the highest Temple perch where everybody in Jerusalem could see him; where Jesus could shout just as he dove off, “*Hey look at me; I’m the mighty Messiah!*” **Satan was tempting Jesus to make his anointed life all about himself**, and Jesus was having none of it. Because he knew that God did not like being tested one bit!

Saints, why in the world would we ever feel the need to test God? Some things need to be tested. Tires on our vehicles need to be tested. But you know what? *God is not a tire!* And neither is our faith. Is our faith so untrustworthy that it constantly needs to be tested? Why in a time of crisis would anyone who truly trusts God feel the need to force God’s hand or manufacture tests of our faith? God is not a tire, nor is God a

divine butler who comes running anytime we ring a bell and answers our prayers only in the way we want them answered. What the heck kind of god is that? Certainly not one who is capable of getting us through the wilderness, right?

Saints, life itself is a test! Life is one tough test, it's tough enough without us having to challenge both God and ourselves along the way. Our faith is meant to get us through those tough times, and we are in just such a time right now. Think about all the times God has gotten us through life's greatest challenges. Have we, like the Israelites in the Wilderness, forgotten that? What possible purpose does it serve to test God now by going against the learned advice of the medical experts and endangering our fellow disciples? The Tony Spells of the world claim to have a strong faith, but do they really? If so, why do they constantly feel the need to test God and themselves? Their defiance is not bravery; it's just the opposite.

So back to the first question: Who's right when it comes to whether or not we should gather in numbers to worship in the midst of this pandemic? I think it all comes down to what kind of faith we possess. Is our faith about showing off, about shouting from the pinnacle of the Temple, "*Hey, look at me!*" Is it about daring God not to save us? Or is it about getting our hands dirty- feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, and fighting for the oppressed as we labor together for the Kingdom of God? We know how Jesus would answer that question, do we not? Of course we do.

You know, there was one episode in the Gospels when Jesus felt it was necessary to respond to a test and it's described in Matthew. We know that Jesus and John the Baptist had a close relationship, that Jesus journeyed to the Jordan River to be there with John and eventually be baptized by him, and we can only imagine the conversations they must have had about the Kingdom of God and their role in it. By Matthew 11 John had been arrested by Herod Antipas and...

"When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.'"

Want to know if Jesus is the true messiah? Don't ask him to see him jump off the top of the Temple, or protect church members from Covid-19 by distributing "anointed handkerchiefs." Instead look to see what he's doing out on the streets, down here on earth! If you want to know if a church is the true church don't look to see what headlines it's grabbing, look to see what it's doing down in the dirt. In other words, DON'T TEST GOD; DO THE WORK! That's the answer to the test; that's who Jesus was. That's who WE are too!

I'm going to close with the words of the Reverend Nathan Empsall, director of a grassroots Christian group called Faithful America who launched a petition calling for churches to stop meeting in person. Here's how he justified such an action:

"Suspending in-person worship is not just about protecting those who go to the actual church service," he says. "It's about protecting the lives of every single grocery store worker, gas station attendant and healthcare worker they meet. It truly is about loving our neighbor and healing the sick, which are things Jesus told us to go do."

You know, there are so many people turned off by the church these days. They look at the headlines and they think all we care about is ourselves; that we don't believe in science; that we're prejudice; that we're opposed to immigration. We do all these things that push people farther and farther away, especially young people. What will bring people back to church is rediscovering what it means to truly be the church, modeled on the life of Jesus. Not when we're daring God or testing God or saying "*Boohoo, we're the poor persecuted!*" No, we bring people into the church by one action alone- when we are truly the Messiah to others.

Used Bikes & Sewing Machines WANTED!!!

With everyone staying home during the pandemic, there is much cleaning and de-cluttering going on.

Save your old bikes and sewing machines to help someone in need!!

"One person's garbage, is another person's treasure!!!"



Do you have an old bike or sewing machine that you aren't using?

New Dover UMC can help take it off your hands!!!

Our Annual Pedals for Progress Drive is right around the corner!

Saturday September 12, 2020 - 9:00am to 12noon

New Dover UMC

687 New Dover Road

Edison, NJ

For more information call:
Church Office @ (732)381-9478
Paulette Harland @ (732)259-0852



FOOD MINISTRY

Just want to keep all updated . Your continued support of our food mission and partnership with Wawa and St. Joseph's Social Service Center is so awesome !!

In the last 2 weeks, we delivered 66 emergency food bags. These bags are put together from donations brought to the church. For a complete list of items needed, please go to our website www.newdoverumc.org under Food Ministry. Everyone who has helped pack those bags THANK YOU !

Tami Pino has been awesome with getting our shopping done for items we need (SHELF STABLE MILK). We use our \$\$ donations to make that happen. Thanks, Tami. Wawa has been good to us ,,,, a big thanks to Eleanor & Gary Campbell and Jim DeLand for being drivers and doing pick ups and deliveries ...THANK YOU !

And to everyone who is making sandwiches at home and dropping off at church THANK YOU !!! I want all of you to know how much i appreciate everything you do to help and the people that we are helping are truly grateful for what we are doing and its really beautiful. Lastly only a few short weeks ago we really stepped up and started our sandwich mission , well it is growing every week today I delivered over 300 sandwiches !!!!

Brian was recently interviewed for The Relay (a GNJUMC publication) and this is what he said,

“We couldn’t do what we do without our peeps in church and our neighbors in our community that see what we do and walk with us in mission,” said Brian Richards, who is a lay delegate at the church. “I always keep a few lunch bags when we deliver to give to people on the street looking for a meal.”

For more information you can go to our website, www.newdoverumc.org or contact Brian Richards (732) 433-3000.

YOU GUYS ARE ALL AWESOME !!! GOD IS GOOD.



REFLECTIONS IN QUARANTINE A DEUX

Monday to Friday, Saturday, Sunday,
Each week full of daily routines;
Then the virus came to stay,
And blew my days to smithereens.

The debacle began on a Thursday (I think),
When I entered the grocery store milieu;
Cars circled the lot like skaters at a rink,
I got the last of two carts in the queue.

Inside, the store was nuttier than fruitcake,
People running down each aisle in haste;
Piling carts high with all they could take,
Then watching ice cream melt in lines slow as paste.

Did I not mention the great TP caper?
A product usually taken for granted;
Disappeared like a tornado had sucked up the paper,
Leaving shelves empty and slightly slanted.

Then my calendar became a shipwreck,
Church closed for two weeks (or was it three?)
Finally I said to myself, "Oh what the heck,
It looks like the entire month is free!"

State quarantine descended, days dragged like years,
(was it that long? I can't really recall);
I was hoping to get a catalog from Sears,
To put in the loo down the hall.

My spouse was forced to work from home,
Stuck all day in the home office room;
No colleagues to visit, no hallways to roam,
Feeling somewhat like Job under descending gloom.

Hoping for an end to the stalemate,
a resolution, there was none;
Time seemed to be running late,
(couldn't tell, there wasn't much sun).

Charmin reappeared but then meat took a hike,
Tofu loaf was not my first pick;
Trying to substitute a protein alike,
Wait, my 100 cans of beans should do the trick!

Lord, are you trying to drive me insane?
When is this madness going to stop?
Maybe that's why Abel was killed by Cain,
He probably took the man's last pork chop.

But it seems as though God has plans of His own,
Waiting for us to surrender our will and bend;
I feel like I'm in the midst of the Twilight Zone,
But I'm hanging in with Him until the end.

God is always in the house, my friends,
Our trials are tough, but our reward will be sweet;
Love, grace and mercy to all He extends,
So let's live our faith, fight the fight, NO RETREAT!

Anita Davis, April 30, 2020



High School

*Hadassah Bandela
Timothy Christian School*

*Angelina Budala
J. P. Stevens High School*

*Steven Castlegrant
Colonia High School*

*Ryan C. Heyducek
Hunterdon South High School*

*Jeisun Poornaselvan
J.P. Stevens High School*

College

*Gem Kristian Aludino
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science
Rutgers University*

*Jabez Wesly Kingsly
Bachelor of Science in Math and Computer Science
Rutgers University*

*Emma Patrimonio
Bachelor of Music
Montclair State University
Summa Cum Laud*

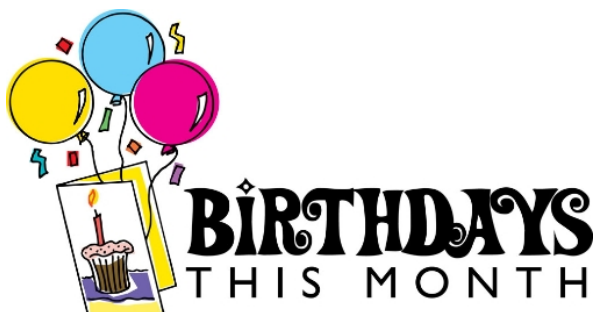
*Christine Rowlands
Master's Degree in Special Education
University of Maine*

June Birthdays

- 1 *Lauren DeZaio*
Amy Silva
- 2 *Sunhee Yoon*
- 5 *Harold Petersen*
- 6 *Evan Gilmore*
- 7 *Marilou Lelina*
- 8 *Xander Christian*
Pramila Ponugubaty
- 9 *Jelovus Jeevaraj*
- 10 *Rosalina Allarey*
Margaret Silva
- 13 *Jaffy Jeevaraj*
- 15 *Meghan Vilela*
- 16 *Andrew Hunt*
Danielle Mizak
- 18 *Daniel Gray*
- 19 *Frankie Pagano*
- 20 *Stefanie Ladym*
- 21 *Charles Bennett*
- 22 *Jayne Bonner*
- 23 *Marilynne Romeo*
- 24 *Frank Pagano*
- 25 *Zill Christian*
Caroline Christian
- 27 *Maureen Sanders*
- 28 *Lina Christian*
- 30 *Alice Bennett*
Sam De La Paz

June Anniversaries

- 2 *Thomas & Sunitha Duggimpudi*
Charles & Janet Greve
- 5 *Daniel & Sharon Gray*
- 15 *Raj & Sarita Cimala*
- 25 *Kevin & Paulette Harland*



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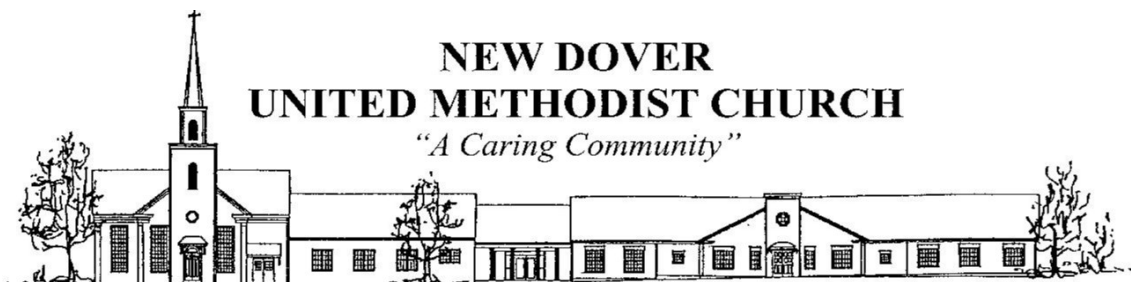
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Church Office 732-381-9478

Fax 732-381-9479

E-mail : admin@newdoverumc.org



**NEW DOVER
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

"A Caring Community"

