

# Weekly Messenger

DECEMBER 13, 2019

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## THE JOYOUS PARADOX OF ADVENT CHRISTIANITY.COM | BY KATHERINE BRITTON

*"Come, Thou long-expected Jesus  
Born to set Thy people free...  
Dear Desire of every nation,  
Joy of every longing heart"*

"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him." - Luke 12:35-36

Like so many Christian doctrines, the Advent season represents a bit of a paradox. I have to thank my colleague Sarah Phillips for expanding my understanding of the tradition, as the three purple candles and one pink candle were mostly a Christmas countdown to me. But Advent has a greater richness if we have eyes to see.

I found a parallel to the Advent paradox on a recent trip. A couple weeks ago, four of my college friends and I met for a rare weekend together, as we live hundreds of miles apart today. We made pizza, giggled, and spent hours "sharing and caring" like we used to in college, despite the fact that half of us are now married and one of us had a toddler in tow. We were delighted just to be with people who once shared so much with us. As I prepared to leave, I was certainly a bit nostalgic for "the good old days." And yet, I was also thinking about the family and friends awaiting me back in Richmond. I think we all felt a similar tension - not unpleasantly - as the goodbyes rolled around.

Advent represents a coming rather than a going away, but holds a similar tension. On the one hand, we look backwards to Christ's first coming in the manger. On the other, we look forward to the Second Coming and the fullness of our reunion with the Lord. And here we are, stuck between the two in the 21st century.

Advent encompasses so many human feelings - hopeful longing, wistful remembrance, renewed wonder, and more. We are twice waiting, first with the nation of Israel waiting for the Messiah, and then with Christians around the world waiting for the time when "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rev. 7:17). As such, this season is much more than a tradition. It's a season that every person can relate to, because we've all experienced longing. And only one thing can truly fulfill our longings.

That's part of the beauty of celebrating Christ's birth at this dark time of year. We just experienced the winter solstice yesterday; now the days begin to brighten, just as Christ comes to be "the light of men." Our longing for brighter days is literally at hand. The dark night of sin's reign ends as we repent, and joy comes to the world.

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Our Chrismon Tree

During Advent, the 11:00 AM Sunday School class is making Chrismons while they listen to the book *One Wintery Night*, by Ruth Bell Graham. This book tells the Christmas story beginning with creation and ending with Christ's resurrection.

Chrismons are Christmas decorations that are symbols representing our faith. Traditionally they are only colored white and gold. Like ornaments, they are placed on a Chrismon tree during Advent. The word Chrismon is a combination of the words Christ and monogram. They help us remember that Christmas is the celebration of Jesus's birthday.

Chrismons were first made by Frances Spencer at the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia in 1957. She also thought of the word Chrismon. The idea quickly spread to other churches.

Our paper Chrismon Tree is displayed on the wall between the stairs and side entrance doors. Please stop by each week to see what new Chrismons have been added and an explanation of what they each represent.



## A Message from Together In Missions

The God's Country Cooperative Parish is in the eastern part of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. It covers a 2500 square mile area from Engadine near Lake Michigan, up to Paradise at Whitefish Bay, to Grand Marais on Lake Superior's south shore and encompasses McMillan, Germfask, Newberry and Hulbert. Although it is located in some of the most beautiful country you could ever hope to see, the isolation, extremely harsh long winters, and scarcity of jobs bring real challenges to these churches and the communities they serve. Unlike our more densely populated areas where you might find another United Methodist church within a few miles, these churches can be up to 100 miles from their sister churches in the Cooperative. Yet these seven communities of faith combine their resources, share their faith and, through their active presence, work to bring self esteem, hope and faith to all God's children throughout their vast parish.



UNITED METHODIST MINISTRIES

The formation of God's Country Cooperative Parish came about because of necessity. During the 1960s and 1970s, the seven churches that now make up the Parish were served by only two pastors. One served Newberry and Paradise, and the other served all five churches of the "McMillan Charge" – McMillan, Engadine, Hulbert, Germfask and Grand Marais. These seven churches covered five counties, five school systems, five funeral homes, at least nine cemeteries, four hospitals, two regional hospitals, and several nursing homes. The first seeds of the Cooperative Parish were planted by Pastor Audrey Dunlap, Rev. Ralph Edwards, District Superintendent John Grenfell Jr., and Field Worker Rev. John Huhtala. Many meetings between any or all of these four took place in 1976 and 1977. Ideas were bounced around and support for the idea of some type of cooperative ministry began to grow.

On August 13-18, 1980 a meeting was held at the Hulbert church which called for a plan to secure final approval of all seven churches individually to form a Cooperative Parish. The Administrative Boards of each church, according to a previously set policy, had to provide their approval in the minutes of their meeting to make it official. At this special meeting in Hulbert were the Rev. Robert Davis (Conference Parish Developer), Larry Brooks, David Campbell, Audrey Dunlap, and Dave Hill who was the "Director-to-be".

September 7, 1980 – all seven churches had given their approval and the birth of this Cooperative was accomplished.

Each church paid a percentage of this budget.

At the Advisory Committee meeting on November 22nd, 1982, a plan was developed to name the Parish. At the time it was still called the "McMillan-Newberry Coop". A contest was designed and held in all seven churches. The contest came to an end on January 9th, 1983 with the judges selecting the name "God's Country Cooperative Parish". Dr. James Terrian of the Newberry church received a Jerusalem Bible for his winning entry.

The God's Country Cooperative Parish had become a reality.

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## NEW PROGRESS TOWARD FULFILLING OUR YEAR END OBLIGATIONS



- Your faithful regular giving and your extra giving are making a difference!
- Last Sunday we received \$15,000 and used this toward fulfilling more of our year end obligations. Our progress since November is represented by the red and green links in the chain. We are well on our way to finishing strong!
- **We still require approximately \$25,000 to fulfill our remaining year-end obligations** for salaries, utilities, conference ministry shares (apportionments), property upkeep, etc. This is represented by the gray/dashed links in the chain above.
- Please ensure your 2019 financial commitment is fulfilled before the end of the year.
- **Please continue to give extra, if you are able**, to ensure we meet all our obligations for 2019. Simply mark "extra" on your offering envelope or include it on the Operating Fund line.

### WAYS TO MAKE YOUR DECEMBER AND YEAR END GIFTS:

- Cash or checks
- E-Giving (find the link at [uticaumc.org](http://uticaumc.org) under "More")
- Stocks and securities (contact office for information)

THANK YOU!!

## The Church Library

Did you know that Utica UMC has a library? You've probably seen it and perhaps did not realize it! The library is located next to the Sanctuary, with a stained glass art piece hanging next to it's door.

"Everyone is invited to stop in the library and take a **free magazine**. They have a Christmas theme and contain devotional readings, recipes, and more.

While you are in the library, please browse our book collection and perhaps find something good to read!"

-Joan Sanders



## Advent Study

With Teresa Winkler

This study will help you "discover a way of seeing that opens your eyes to ordinary amazing grace, a way of living that is fully alive, and a way of becoming present to God that brings you deep and lasting joy." - "One Thousand Gifts" by Ann Voskamp



Sundays  
at 9:30am

Tuesdays  
at 11am

Classes meet in the conference room.

DON'T  
FORGET

**This Sunday the last day to drop of unwrapped gifts for the Giving Tree!!**

Dear Utica UMC Family,

Thank you so much for your love and support during our time of transition from Michigan to Wisconsin. All of your good wishes were a huge blessing to us. We will miss our Utica church family terribly, but we know we will find new friends here in our new church.

Our new address is: 5946 Carter Moon Pass, Madison, WI 53718 and our email addresses will remain the same.

Let us know if you plan to be in the neighborhood!

God's blessings to you all,  
Charles and Anita White

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## CELEBRATION PLACE

**“The Celebration Place dream is to put Celebrate Recovery out of business by breaking the cycles of dysfunction in our families.”  
—John Baker, Founder Celebrate Recovery**

Celebration Place is a 52-week complementary children's resource to Celebrate Recovery. So while adults explore topics that bring healing and wholeness, kids discover the same truths in age-appropriate ways!

### **Celebration Place gives kids...**

- Hope for all the amazing things God has in store for them
- Truths that help them overcome life's challenges by learning to lean on Jesus
- Joy as they embark on a wonderful, year-long journey of songs, games, videos, impactful experiences, and great conversation
- Friendships with other children

It has everything you need to lead kids as they make Jesus the enduring, rock-solid foundation of their lives. Celebration Place is designed to inspire kids with hope, joy, and happiness while they learn to rely on God.



### **HOW IT WORKS:**

Weekly lessons follow a two-hour schedule that includes songs, small groups, crafts, learning centers, games, teaching times, and free play. Every lesson closes with a time of commitment, reflection, or worship-and the child version of the Serenity Prayer.

During small groups, kids use their Celebration Place Journals to get in touch with their feelings and record their thoughts. Then kids tear out their Celebration Place Journal pages and take home the family conversation starter that's included on the reverse side. This unique aspect of the journal opens the door to healing communication by teaching kids to talk to each other, talk to God, and talk to their parents.

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## This Week's Calendar

### Sunday, December 15th

Free Blood Pressure Screenings

**COOKIE WALK FUNDRAISER**

- 8:45am - Chancel Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary
- 9:00am - Fellowship Time - Parlor
- 9:30am - Advent Study - Conference Room
- 9:30am - Traditional Worship Service - Sanctuary
- 9:30am - Youth/Teen Sunday School - Room 106
- 9:45am - Children's Sunday School - Rooms 304 & 305
- 10:30am - Fellowship & Coffee - Parlor
- 11:00am - Contemporary Worship Service - Fellowship Hall

### Monday, December 16th

- 10:00am - Commit To Be Fit - Room 301
- 1:00pm - Prayer Quilting - Conference Room
- 6:00pm - Women's Emmaus 4th Day Meeting - Library
- 6:45pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal - Sanctuary
- 7:00pm - "Into The Word" Bible Study - Conference Room
- 7:45pm - Gosbells Rehearsal - Music Room

### Tuesday, December 17th

- 11:00am - Advent Study - Conference Room
- 1:00pm - Harmony Circle (A UMW Group) - Library
- 7:00pm - ALS Support - Parlor
- 6:00pm - Together In Mission Meeting - Room 301
- 7:30pm - Adult Children of Alcoholics - Room 104

### Wednesday, December 18th

- 10:00am - Faith Circle (A UUMW Group) - Room 104
- 6:30pm - Adult Bible Study re: Prayer - Boardroom
- 6:30pm - Men's Step Study - Library & Room 105
- 6:30pm - Women's Step Study - Library & Room 105

### Thursday, December 19th

- 10:00am - Commit to be Fit - Room 301
- 11:00am - Women's Emmaus 4th Day Meeting - Library
- 12:00pm - Food for Body & Soul (Bible Study) - Conference Room
- 6:30pm - Stephen Ministry Meeting - Board Room
- 6:30pm - Celebrate Recovery - Fellowship Hall
- 7:00pm - Adult Bible Study re: Hebrews - Room 302

### Saturday, December 20th

- 8:30am - UM Men's Breakfast - Fellowship Hall
- 9:00am - Ruth's Knit & Stitch - Conference Room



# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Ministry Team:

Rev. Don Gotham  
srpastor@uticaumc.org

## Music Ministry

David Fox, Organist, Bell, & Chancel  
Choirs Director  
FoxDavidL@sbcglobal.net

Christopher Heldt, Contemporary  
Worship Leader  
chris.heldt@uticaumc.org

## Youth Leader

Suzy Palmer  
suzy.palmer@uticaumc.org

## Communications Director

Beth Miller  
bmiller@uticaumc.org

## Secretary/Bookkeeper

Charlotte Ramsey  
charlotte@uticaumc.org

## Custodian

Rachelle Heldt

## Child Care

Caitlyn Wilson

## Sunday Worship Times:

**9:30 AM**  
with Organ, Choir and  
Handbells  
in the Sanctuary

**11:00 AM**  
with our Worship Band  
in Fellowship Hall



## Our Mission:

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for  
the transformation of the world.

## Our Vision:

To reach and nurture our community  
with the love of Christ.

## Office Hours:

**Monday-Thursday**  
8:00am - 4:00pm

**Friday**  
8:00am - 2:00pm

**Phone:** (586)731-7667

Like us on Facebook!

Utica United  
Methodist Church  
8650 Canal Road,  
Sterling Heights, MI  
(586) 731-7667  
www.UticaUMC.org

## Classes/Studies

### Advent Study:

Sundays at 9:30am  
Tuesdays at 11am  
Meetings will be held in the  
Conference Room

This study will help you "discover a  
way of seeing that opens your eyes  
to ordinary amazing grace, a way  
of living that is fully alive, and a  
way of becoming present to God  
that brings you deep and lasting  
joy." - "One Thousand Gifts" by Ann  
Voskamp

### Food For Body & Soul

Thursdays at 12:00pm  
in the Conf. Room  
Bring your lunch and study the word  
of the bible with others! The current  
focus will be the book of John.

### Wednesday Night Study

Wednesdays at 6:30pm  
in the Conf. Room  
New book starting soon! See  
Cookie Miller for info!

### Thursday Night Study

Thursdays at 7:00pm  
in Room 302  
Join this class for a study of the  
book of Hebrews. Have some good  
fellowship, a bit of fun and a better  
understanding of Bible times and  
the teachings of our Lord. All are  
welcome regardless of bible  
knowledge!

### "Into The Word" Bible Study

Mondays at 7:00pm  
in the Conf. Room  
This study will focus on the book of  
Isaiah. Contact Sharon Van Tuyl or  
the office for questions.

### Commit To Be Fit

Mondays & Thursdays  
10am-11am in room 301  
Follow along to fitness videos with  
others. Includes variety of chair  
aerobics, strength training, and  
stretching.

### Celebrate Recovery Step Studies

Wednesdays  
6:30pm in room 104  
This is a Celebrate Recovery class.  
Speak with Bob or Patsy Clark if  
you are interested.



Can't make it to church or just  
looking for a fast and easy  
way to give your? Donate  
online with a one time gift or  
set up automatic donations!

Visit our website to give now!

[www.uticaumc.org/e-giving](http://www.uticaumc.org/e-giving)

If you need assistance, feel  
free to call the office!

## Deadline Information:

Items for The Weekly Messenger,  
The Weekly Prayer List, or  
Announcements must be submitted  
by the **Sunday prior to posting**.  
Submit to [bmiller@uticaumc.org](mailto:bmiller@uticaumc.org),  
contact the office, or complete a  
form in the office.