



Weekly Messenger

DECEMBER 20, 2019

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MESSAGE FROM REV. DON GOTHAM

At our Tuesday staff meeting, I shared with the staff the story of a mayor who had experienced great success in re-making his city. Crime drastically decreased during his term. The murder rates tumbled, and the town enjoyed a month without a murder for the first time in over fifty years. The mayor was successful in convincing gang members to walk away from their gangs. Drug trafficking fell off precipitously, and private investment in the economy of the city significantly increased.

A great many mayors would love to have this kind of success. Lots of people bring excellent pedigrees to their positions. The mayor for this city held degrees from Ivy League schools and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University. More than the exceptional education he had received, there was something this mayor brought to his commitment to serving the city. He chose to live in the worst part of the town.

Among the drug dealers, the prostitutes, the gang members, was where the mayor decided he would take up residence. His decision to live in the midst of what was wrong in his city was credited with the city's turnaround. The reason he decided to live in the squalor? His faith compelled him!

Next Wednesday, we will celebrate the birth of our savior, the one who chose to leave the splendor and glory of heaven to live among us amid our squalor. The perfect son of God came to live here among us, and in so doing, has made a seismic difference in our lives. Because of Immanuel, God with us, we realize God is not some remote, uncaring celestial being who is ambivalent toward us.

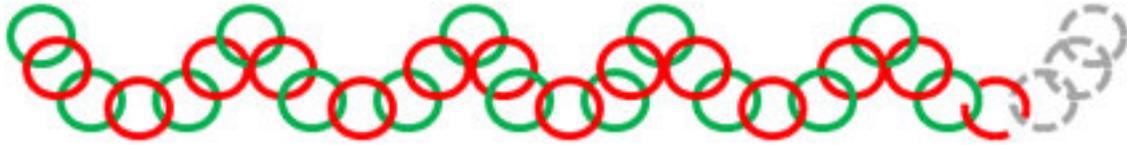
This Christmas, let's celebrate the God of love, whose love compelled Him to come and dwell with humans who could never merit such grace. Let's also choose to honor what Christ has done for us in coming to live among us by considering how we can be a blessing to those who need to know someone else cares about them. This Christmas, let's decide to risk a bit of our comfort to reflect the light of Christ to someone whose life is filled with far too much darkness.

Merry Christmas!
Rev. Don

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

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFUL GIVING



- As of December 18, we have paid in FULL our conference ministry shares (apportionments) and salaries/compensation for the year.
- There are only a few year-end bills/expenses remaining.
- Our next payroll will be January 2. We will also need to ensure funds are available for that impending need.
- God loves cheerful givers. Our progress since November 1 (represented by the red and green links in the chain) has been inspiring. It is truly an answer to many prayers. The gray/dashed links represent the remaining few expenses and income required for 2019.
- Thank you for your faithful and gracious giving. It has enabled us to finish 2019 (and start 2020) in a solid position!
- If you have not already fulfilled your 2019 financial commitment, please do so before the end of the year.
- Also, remember that our special Christmas offering will be used to help us meet our promised giving to programs such as Cass Avenue Social programming, Children's Methodist Home, N.O.A.H, our missionaries (Randy Hildebrandt and Paul Webster) and Mujali Agricultural Center.

WAYS TO MAKE YOUR DECEMBER AND YEAR END GIFTS:

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

Any donations that you would like on your 2019 statement of giving must be to the office by Noon on December 31st, or by midnight on Dec. 31st through E-giving. If you have any questions regarding your current statement, please contact Charlotte Ramsey via the office phone, 586-731-7667 or email: charlotte@uticaumc.org.

THANK YOU!!

Cookie Walk Results!

THANK YOU cookie bakers and buyers!

Over 24 bakers contributed more than 120 dozen cookies for our Annual Cookie Walk on December 15. We received **\$1,053** in free will donations from individuals filling their cookie containers with their selections. This money will be used toward our year end obligations (salaries, utilities, conference ministry shares/apportionments, property upkeep, etc.).

Your support is GREATLY appreciated.



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.

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...

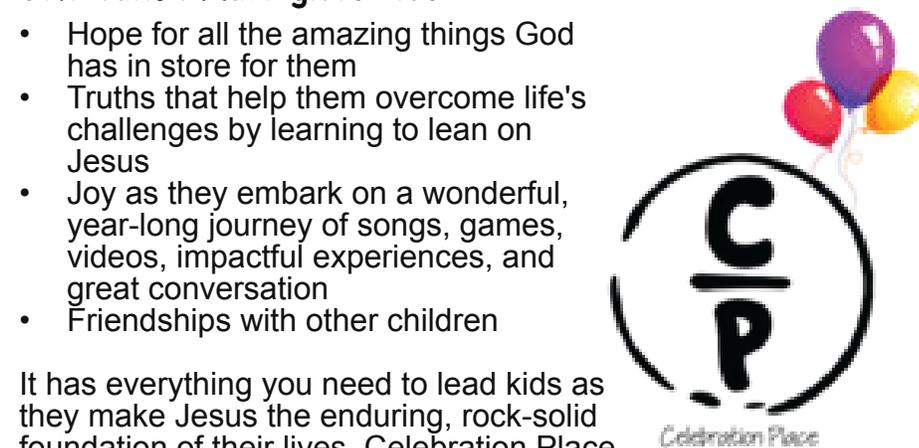
- Hope for all the amazing things God has in store for them
- Truths that help them overcome life's challenges by learning to lean on Jesus
- Joy as they embark on a wonderful, year-long journey of songs, games, videos, impactful experiences, and great conversation
- Friendships with other children

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.



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

"WAITING"



Once again, we are waiting for Christmas. We wait for the birth of the Christ child and the praise and singing and adoration for the birth of a savior. We wait patiently. I had some practice in waiting this week. I had to make a Doctor's appointment on Monday as I had become sick Sunday evening. I had not been feeling up to par for a couple weeks but basically thought I was just tired. I went to my Drs appointment and of course, had to wait for a bit, not bad but more than usual. The doctor sent me to the Lab for tests. The girl at the lab told me she was closing for lunch and

didn't have the vials necessary for the culture the Dr had ordered and that I should go over to the hospital and have my x ray and lab work done there. I went to the hospital and there were a few people ahead of me. I waited and waited, they seemed to be taking about 15 minutes between calls and I noticed that the people went in but never came out. I thought they called my name but when I went up, they said no, they had called Janice. Meanwhile Janice is at the desk yelling at this elderly man who was deafer than I, that they had called me ahead of her. Janice was keeping track. I apologized for my mistake and went back to sit down again. Got out my phone and called a lab by my house. The Lab said they were open, but I should come as soon as possible. I then left the hospital after bidding goodbye to the deaf gentleman. I didn't think he heard me, so I pointed to the door and waved goodbye. I then drove to the Lab by my house and had to wait a few minutes but nothing bad. Then I had to drive back to the outpatient x ray place near the doctor's office where I once again had to wait for a bit to get my chest x ray. Then it was to the pharmacy by my house to pick up the prescription. Unfortunately, the doctor had called the wrong Kroger pharmacy. They checked the profile (I didn't know I had a profile at Kroger) and found my prescription was at 25 and Dequindre instead of 26 and Van Dyke. So, I then had to go over there to pick up the medication. I arrived home from my 11:30 appointment after 4 PM. Many of you know that I have frequently prayed for patience and that I don't wait well, God gave me a day to teach me patience. I think I failed. But I will get another chance to practice waiting and patience. God is not done with me yet. Mary trusted as she waited for the Christ child's birth.

Luke 1:46-49 And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the mighty one has done great things for me-holy is his name.

Lord, we await the arrival of the Christ child, the Christmas miracle. May we be patient as we wait, and may we remember what the season is really about. May we remember the meaning of Christmas, the arrival of the Christ child. May it grow in our kindness to others, in our caring, in our actions, in the way we treat those less fortunate. Amen

Grace Epperson

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

This Week's Calendar

Sunday, December 22nd

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 23rd

- 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 24th - CHRISTMAS EVE

-Office Closed-

- 11:00am - Family/Contemporary Christmas Eve Service - Fellowship Hall**
- 7:00pm - Gosbells Rehearsal - Sanctuary
- 8:00pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - Sanctuary**

Wednesday, December 25th - CHRISTMAS DAY

-Office Closed-



Thursday, December 26th

- 10:00am - Commit to be Fit - Room 301
- 11:00am - Women's Emmaus 4th Day Meeting - Library
- 6:30pm - Celebrate Recovery - Fellowship Hall

Saturday, December 28th

- 9:00am - Ruth's Knit & Stitch - Conference Room

****Please note there will not be a Weekly Messenger sent out Friday, December 27, 2019.
We will be back in action Friday, January 3, 2020!**

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!

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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

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,
contact the office, or complete a
form in the office.