

# Weekly Messenger

October 23, 2020

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## Where two or three are gathered...

Since sharing the decision of the Leadership Board to adjust worship times, I've heard from some folks who indicate a 9 am start time is too early. In an effort to understand these concerns more thoroughly, I am offering a time to meet and discuss these concerns. I will welcome folks here at church on Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 pm. We will maintain social distancing, and mask wearing will be required. The room we meet in will be determined by the number of folks who come to meet.

Matthew 18: 20 reads: For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Fully expecting God will be with us when we gather,

Rev. Don

A couple reminders:

October 25th is the last drive-in style service for the year.

November 1st is All Saints Sunday. We will have 1 service in the sanctuary at 9am. Masks are required all times you are in the building. Social distancing must be maintained while in service. If you are sick, please stay home. The service will be recorded and will become available at the beginning of the week.



# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Trunk or Treat

## Trunk or Treat



October 31, 2020 from 2-4pm. We need volunteers to bring their trunks and candy to pass out to the kids. Cars will be socially distanced, masks and gloves should be worn while passing out treats. We have some games for the kids that we might ask you to help oversee as well. Please call the office at 586-731-7667 to sign up you and your car.

*Transformed by Grace, Faith, and Love*

**As God's love resides in us, we love others.**

"Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love" (1 John 4:8).

**This Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup> is Commitment Sunday  
Please bring your commitment cards to Church  
Or mail your commitment card to the Church Office**

ESTIMATE OF GIVING CARD for 2021  
Utica United Methodist Church  
8650 Canal Road, Sterling Heights MI 48314

**"Transformed by Grace"**

I (we) promise to worship regularly.  
 I (we) commit to diligent study in God's word.  
 I (we) will commit to praying for the ministry of the church.

I (we) will faithfully and cheerfully give the following:

**MY (OUR) OFFERING WILL BE:**

\$  Weekly  Monthly  Annually  
(Please circle above the one that applies)

This commitment represents a Step Up towards tithing.

I (we) can't make a financial commitment at this time, but will support & pray for the work of the Lord.

Name  Date   
Address  Phone   
City  State  Zip

**Stewards  
Transformed**

The Free Oil Change Ministry provides an oil change and fluid top offs for single parent low income homes. The Free Oil Change Ministry 2020 is supported by our church as well as Trinity Lutheran and King of Kings Lutheran Churches.

With the complications that Covid 19 provided us we were unsure if we would be able to provide it to the community this year. After discussing the many challenges, it was determined that rather than abandon this ministry when there is such a need, we would look into outsourcing the work. We decided that we would look to guiding our guests to a small business that may be hurting also. In presenting our proposal to nine different quick oil changes we only had response from one of them in our general area.

Sterling Quick Lube at Van Dyke and 17 Mile Road agreed to provide an oil change, fluid top off and check tire inflation on a non-appointment basis from October 01 to October 15. Monday-Friday 9-5pm and Saturday 9-3pm. We printed out vouchers to 61 people that called in requesting this assistance. 47 Vouchers were picked up at Trinity and 46 were turned in for the service.

Thank you for supporting this much needed ministry. If you feel moved to donate for the upcoming year please note on your check the Oil Change Ministry or if you want to donate cash see Ron Borgacz, Bob Baldwin, or Barry Croteau and we'll deposit in the fund.

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Celebrate Recovery – Celebration Place

These past seven months have been difficult. Our complete way of life has been disrupted, and our faith tested. We have been isolated, forced to change the way we move about, the way we shop, learn, interact, and the way we worship. If we're honest, not all of the methods we choose to cope with are pretty. The truth be known....we don't do change well.

Another truth is, that left alone, to our own devices, we wander. And when we wander, we discover, or rediscover doors left better unopened. At first those little tests seem easy to overcome, but soon those very same things overcome us. We all need a sense of community, a place we belong, Celebrate Recovery and Celebration Place is such a place.

Statics indicate that during the Covid crisis, alcohol and drug abuse increased dramatically. Spousal abuse and child abuse and elder abuse also increased dramatically also. And then there are those "less dramatic" issues; the amount of food we eat, the places our internet searches take us, the amount of money we spend on stuff we can't afford, all those things we justify with, and preface with "it's only...." At Celebrate Recovery we deal with the "dramatic" and the "less dramatic" issues that face all of us. So if you've found yourself peeking in, going through, "doors left better unopened", give Celebrate Recovery a chance to lock those doors, and throw away the keys.

What about the children in your life? This lock-down, has impacted them deeply also. Celebration Place is a program for elementary aged kids, designed to help them deal, in positive ways, the difficulties they face in their little corner of the world. Think about it from their perspective, no school, and limited contact with friends. Add to that a parent who has lost a job, the stress of having a parent fill the role of an educator. Celebration Place gives these children a place to develop coping skills in a Christian learning environment.

Join us as Celebrate Recovery re-starts on October 22, 2020, 6:30 P.M. in Fellowship Hall. Proper protocols will be in place to assure a safe environment. Celebration Place will resume on November 5<sup>th</sup>.



# **THE WEEKLY MESSENGER**

## **THE EBENEZER STONE**

1 Samuel Chapter 7 Verse 12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the Lord helped us." So, the Philistines were subdued and did not invade Israelite territory again.

Ebenezer meant "stone of help." Thereafter, every time an Israeli saw this stone, it would remind them of God's power, provision and protection.

2020 has been a year of trial, anxiety, disappointments, grief and worry. It started out well, we heard of a virus in China, but we live in a country that can handle these problems. Then February came and we became a little more anxious as the news continued to worsen. In March we were shut down, but we thought it would not be long. In fact, I had already planned the cake I would bake for our first Sunday back to normal. But now it is October, and we are still wearing masks, social distancing and washing our hands frequently. It has been like living in the movie Groundhog Day. What we thought would be a short time has been a long time and with no particular ending in sight. I am a firm believer that God uses these times to draw us closer to him. I don't feel like God has sent us a plague, Killer Hornets, Forest Fires, Tornadoes, Hurricanes, and even an Earthquake in Michigan to get our attention; although if God did, it's working.

God uses the trials in our lives to draw his children, each one of us closer to him. He is there to comfort us to lead us and to make us be all we can be. When the Churches had to close it seemed like an impossible thing, how could our church close. Truth is it didn't. The building closed but with prayer God was there to help us continue to be what the church is about. We are the church and we have proved it this year.

Our Pastor and others set up an on-line worship. Every Sunday we could gather by our computers and watch a Sunday service. We were connected. Then in a very short time there was a group that made sure every member was called every week. Being part of this group was a blessing to me because I connected with the out of area members and others and talked and connected with people I had not seen in a long time and some people I had never met. Then there were the volunteers who made over 1800 masks, and the Food Pantry remained open, floors were stripped and re waxed, the kitchen was painted, the wooden doors were refurbished, much was done.

In May I had to give my calls to another because my husband was ill and then he passed away. Then came the church, I was cared for with phone calls, food, prayer and so many cards the mailman came to the door to find out what was going on and if we were okay. Some of the phone calls and cards were from the very people on my "call list." This is the church at work. It goes beyond the walls.

Our work continued and we began meeting in the Parking Lot for outside worship, still maintaining a video of the service on the Web site for those who could not attend or preferred to worship at home. God has been good to us this year. 2020 has been hard but we have been blessed and we have learned lessons about caring for each other and we have learned that God is not just inside the church in the Sanctuary and fellowship hall, but he is outside in the Parking Lot and in our homes.

God is truly within each of us and he calls us to be his people. We are not called to stay inside the building we are called to take the love of Christ that he offers to all outside the building. Now we will be inside once again but for a while there will be no coffee hour, no cake. There will be social distancing and we will wear masks. But we will see each other, talk to each other, and continue to care for each other and when we walk out the door to our homes our neighborhoods and the world, we will take the love of Christ with us. The science is telling us that this is not over yet. But we are in it for the long haul. We will persevere and with God's help we will overcome this pandemic. We will in days to come need an Ebenezer Stone to remind us how far we have come, and that God has been, will be and is always with us and will shelter us in his arms.

Lord, we thank you for your love, for the protection of your grace, You have loved us before we knew you, you will love us today, and you will love us tomorrow and you will love us always. Be with our church as we seek to move outside the walls, to love our neighbor, to love all your children.

Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry, may we be a blessing to him as he is a blessing to us. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve, may they be comforted.

Be with our staff and leaders, guide and protect them. Be with our Bishop and the Cabinet and be with our District Superintendent. Bless their work and guide them.

Grace Epperson

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Ministry Team:

### Senior Pastor

**Reverend Don Gotham**  
srpastor@uticaumc.org

### Ministry Leader Intern **Sunwha Hopgood**

### Contemporary Worship Leader

#### **Mer Renne**

mer@uticaumc.org

### Music Ministry

#### **David Fox**

Organist, Hand Bell & Chancel  
Choir Director

FoxDavidL@sbcglobal.net

### Communications Director

#### **Rachelle Heldt**

rachelle@uticaumc.org

### Secretary/Bookkeeper

#### **Charlotte Ramsey**

charlottte@uticaumc.org

### Youth Leader

#### **Suzy Palmer**

suzy.palmer@uticaumc.org

### Sunday Morning Child Care

#### **Caitlyn Wilson**

## Office Hours:

Mon - Thurs 8am-4pm  
Friday 8am-2pm

**Phone: 586-731-7667**

Food Pantry available  
by appointment only.

## Deadline Information:

Items for The Weekly  
Messenger, The Weekly  
Prayer List, or  
Announcements should  
be submitted by  
Wednesday each week.  
Submit to  
charlotte@uticaumc.org  
for announcements and  
prayer list and to  
rachelle@uticaumc.org  
for the Messenger and  
Electronic Sign  
or call the office.

## Our Mission:

Inviting people to rely  
on Jesus to find  
unexpected purpose,  
peace and joy.

## Keeping Connected

Stay in touch with Utica United Methodist Church by checking our website ([www.uticaumc.org](http://www.uticaumc.org)), following us on Facebook (Utica United Methodist Church) or subscribe to our YouTube Channel (Utica Umc).

If you are not signed up for the Weekly Messenger email, you can do so on our website by clicking on the "More" tab and going to "Weekly Messenger" page to sign up now!

We have an account with both Webex and also with Zoom for groups to meet via telephone and video calls.

As we begin to open back up please be responsible. Stay home if you are ill. Masks are required in the building at all times. Child Care and Sunday School are not available.

## Sunday Worship Times:

This is the last Sunday for outdoor Drive-In Worship at 9am. You can also come inside at 9am to have a more traditional service masks must be worn at all times inside the building. The service is also being live streamed to our YouTube channel each Sunday at 9am. Tune in at home to join us for worship.

*Stay Tuned as service times  
and options are changing in  
November!*

## Donate Online:

You can donate online with a  
one time gift or set up  
automatic donations!

Visit out 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!