

Weekly Messenger

October 30, 2020

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A Season of Thanks...

When the pandemic hit hard in the spring, I set to writing on a daily basis and posting to FaceBook assurances that God cares about all we are going through. I knew the sharp change to life would cause some to question whether God cared about the difficulties we were experiencing. I don't think any of us expected back in the spring that we would still be dealing with the fallout of the virus this many months later. Life has changed, and yet, I believe to the extent we are safely able, it is helpful for us to move forward with life and the seasons of the year.

As we come to November, I began to think of Thanksgiving. How different will Thanksgiving be? If we cannot gather with family will that dampen our gratitude? I began to wonder how we could not only recognize our call to be thankful, but expand it.

To that end, we will focus our worship for the first four Sunday's of November on giving thanks in everything. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 reminds us "Give thanks in every situation because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

It is my prayer that as we focus on being thankful, we will grasp more fully our call as followers of Jesus to be always ready to express our thankfulness to God for the blessings in our lives, and for the gift of a savior who walks the journey with us, in good times and in struggles.

Thankfully,

Rev. Don



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Trunk or Treat



October 31, 2020 from 2-4pm. We still need people to come and bring their trunks and candy. Please join in this fun time with the children in our community. Please wear a mask and to help protect you and the children consider wearing gloves to pass out candy. Candy can also be set out on a small table or in the back of the car where children can just pick a piece as they walk by. Plan to arrive by 1:30 to get parked and set up!

FINANCIAL UPDATE

We are grateful to all of you for your steady, faithful giving this year. The world has been disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, protests, riots and looting, hurricanes and wildfires. But, you have not let this impact your faithfulness for providing financial resources for our Operating Fund, Brighter Future Building Fund, and special giving needs.

Your continued consistent and steady giving through the remainder of this year is important to ensure we are able to fulfill all of our remaining financial obligations. "For great is His love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord. (*Psalm 117, NIV*)

Motown Soup News

Motown Soup is a 501(c)3 based in Utica, Michigan. We work in a State Department of Agriculture licensed kitchen.

We produce delicious mixes that include soups, dips, breads and desserts.

Your support of Motown Soup and our products truly makes a difference in the lives of the hungry, homeless and hurting and free clinics throughout the State of Michigan.

This year due to Covid and indoor restrictions all craft and vendor fairs have been cancelled.

Also our Open House held at Trinity Lutheran Church.

We are offering a 2 week virtual event from November 14th through November 28th.

We will offer specials during this time.

Motown Soup has supported McRest and the Warming Center in previous years.

Please check us out at www.motownsoup.com. Also follow us on Facebook or contact Martha Powers at (586)703-1668.

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Results of Cass Community and Baldwin Center Food Collection

During late September, a call for food donations was announced to support both Cass Community Social Services and Baldwin Center to meet their immediate wish list requests. While these ministries support many of the homeless in their local communities, the demand for services during the Covid-19 pandemic left them in need especially for lunch items. In an effort to provide assistance in the immediate near-term, a request was made for items such as peanut butter & jelly, cereal, soup, pasta & sauce bottled water, individually packaged snacks and bottled water. Your collective response is demonstrated in the photos below:



On behalf of those who benefit from these food items, may God bless all those who provided these generous donations from Utica UMC. As reflected in our mission statement, "Inviting people to rely on Jesus to find unexpected purpose, peace, and joy," we thank you for your support of our ministry partners.

Utica UMC - Together In Mission (TIM) Group

N95 Face Masks

The church office has recently acquired some N95 face masks in both Adult and Child sizes. The Child size lists the age range from 3-14 years old as the fit size. These masks are available for purchase from the office for \$2.00 a mask. If you need a N95 mask please stop in during business hours, call the office (586-731-7667) or e-mail Charlotte at charlotte@uticaumc.org.



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Pastor Appreciation Month

October has been "Pastor Appreciation Month." I hope that you have all taken the opportunity to say, "Thank you for what you do." to your Pastor. I have been thinking about all the Pastors I have had during my 70 and a half years of being an active Methodist and then United Methodist. The first one was an older man who decided that since there was a youth in the church, I was 15, we needed a youth group. A few older people showed up including 2 married couples and the Pastor. We played a game based on the bible and when I did not know the answer, he kindly told me without embarrassing me. My next Pastor in that church was younger and I baby sat his children. He gave me great advice and I really liked him. He told me I needed to leave home and go away to school. I did and he was there for me to talk to and he helped me grow, not only in my faith but in life. He baptized our Son. He taught me many lessons specially to stand on my own two feet and not to expect from others what they were unwilling or unable to give. The Pastors changed and the next one was good but moved on and then came one who betrayed his vows. From him I learned that sometimes we expect Pastors to be above human temptations, most are but sometimes they are not. We moved and we left that church and went to a small church near our house. We had three pastors there. The first was a frequent Mission goer and being a former Optometrist went on Mission trips to Haiti to fit eyeglasses to those in need. I learned from him of the need to spread the love of Christ throughout the world. The next was young and enthusiastic. He and his wife became friends, and his sermons were inspiring and helpful in my faith walk. I sent him a note telling him this and he said he would put this note in his box and when he was having a bad day, he would reach into this box and pull out a note that had encouraged and appreciated him. Years later he wrote telling me that he had pulled out my note and how much he had needed that on a difficult day. Then came the next Pastor and he was young and made many mistakes. I needed church but felt empty and we left that church. I regretted the way I had done this and met him a few years later and we talked and I forgave him for what I had perceived as his difficult nature, I hope he forgave me for mine. Then we had a Pastor who once again I considered a friend. He was an encourager and put me places I did not think I was capable of handling, but he saw in me what I did not see in myself and he helped me grow. Then came one of my all-time favorites and he was great but then too soon he was moved, and he left. Then there were others, it is a truth in the United Methodist Church that Pastors come and go. Now we have a Pastor who has been here 10 years in July. In this church only 2 other Pastors have been here 10 years or longer since 1823. He is a terrific preacher, his faith is an active faith, a man of prayer, he is dependable, if he says it, you can believe it, a faithful husband and Father, a very hard worker, humble, and as a bonus he laughs at my jokes and we share a love of baseball.

Pastors come and go in our lives and we can love them, tolerate them, or dislike them, but we can learn life lessons from all of them. The ones I did not quite see eye to eye with taught me as many valuable lessons as those I loved. They all taught me that God is there in our darkest days, that there is nothing that can separate us from his love, that we are a forgiven people, that we need to love our neighbor whether they are next door, sitting in the pews or standing in the Pulpit, or in some remote foreign place, God calls us to love all his people. I thank God for all of them and the spiritual and life lessons they gave me.

Ephesians 4:11-13 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Heavenly Father we thank you for the gift of those who serve you. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry. Be with those who are ill, who suffer grief, who are isolated, who crave the love and closeness of family and friends during this pandemic. Be with those who are hungry, may they be fed. Be with our country Lord as we go through this election. Be with our staff and leaders Lord, guide them and bless them. Be with our families Lord, protect them.

In Jesus name we pray,
Amen

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

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 our website to give now!

www.uticaumc.org/e-giving

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

Stay in touch with Utica United Methodist Church by checking our website
(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.