



Weekly Messenger

November 13, 2020

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Message from Rev. Don

I write to inform you the Leadership Board met last night to discuss the matter of the rising cases of Covid-19 and whether we could safely gather for in-person worship. Our conversation came at the request of the Bishop of the Michigan Conference, asking churches to consider moving to online-only worship and meetings through the end of the year. The Leadership Board considered the rising case count in Macomb County and the rising number of hospitalizations brought about by the virus's spread.

The board decided to move to online only worship services and meetings immediately. The board is aware of the additional workload this decision places on those responsible for producing our worship services for the online format. Further, they are aware of how meeting virtually for worship or other meetings is a challenge. And while the decision to move back to online-only worship and meetings is not one that will bring anyone joy, it is the responsible, caring decision Christ called us to make.

Some of you might immediately begin to think of Christmas Eve and what will this decision mean for a special service each of us treasures. Rest assured, we have been planning for an exceptional online Christmas Eve service for a while now. These plans will be carried through, and we will offer a beautiful online service.

Others might think of commitments to bring pies for Baldwin Center on Sunday, November 22nd, or of that being the day to turn in their Love Loaves. Plans are in place to allow people to bring those to the church in a drive-thru setting on November 22nd. Please look for more information in upcoming newsletters or on the church website.

In this season, where we have focused on giving thanks to God in all circumstances, I remain thankful for the blessing of thoughtful, measured, and spirit-led leaders in our church who choose to care for our congregation in the times when difficult decisions need to be made. If you get a chance, I invite you to express your thankfulness, too.

Holding tight to Christ,

Rev. Don

Utica United
Methodist Church

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www.UticaUMC.org

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Stewardship Program Update

Thank you to all who have returned a commitment card!

To date, we have received 75 pledges totaling \$283,167.

If you have not yet made a commitment, please prayerfully consider doing so.

Commitment cards are available from the office and can be returned by mail or in person during office hours.

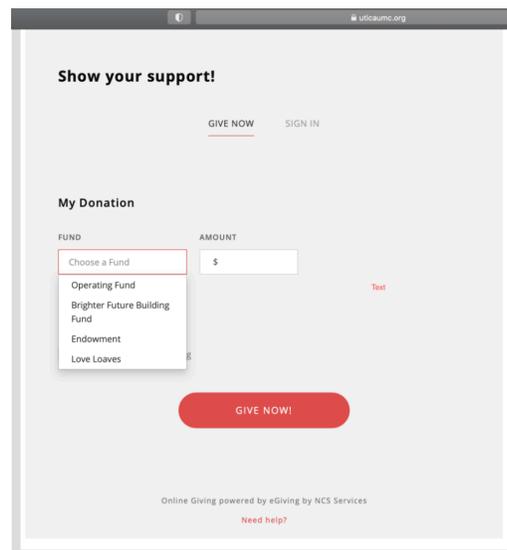


Love Loves and E-Giving

Donations for the Love Loaves in November may be received through our E-giving portal through the end of November. At the beginning of December, you may also give your donation to the Christmas offering through the same E-giving site.

If you have not used the E-giving site, you may find it through our website on the "More" tab. Just use the dropdown for the "fund" you want to use.

If you have any questions, please contact Charlotte in the office for assistance.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL 'ufcaumc.org'. The page title is 'Show your support!'. There are two links: 'GIVE NOW' (underlined) and 'SIGN IN'. Below this is a section titled 'My Donation'. It contains two main input areas: 'FUND' and 'AMOUNT'. The 'FUND' dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'Choose a Fund', 'Operating Fund', 'Brighter Future Building Fund', 'Endowment', and 'Love Loaves'. The 'AMOUNT' field is a text box with a '\$' symbol. To the right of the amount field is a red 'Text' label. At the bottom of the form is a large red 'GIVE NOW!' button. At the very bottom of the page, it says 'Online Giving powered by eGiving by NCS Services' and 'Need help?'.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Thanksgiving Pies for Baldwin Center

Every year, Baldwin Center hosts a Thanksgiving meal at their Soup Kitchen. Our church has been providing the dessert for the Thanksgiving meal for almost thirty years.

DUE TO COVID-19, BALDWIN CAN ONLY ACCEPT "STORE BOUGHT" PIES THIS YEAR.

Please help us continue this tradition by dropping off a pie (or 2) to the church on Sunday, November 22nd. We will also be accepting your love loaf during this time.

We will have a drive-up drop off from 10am - 11am. During this time please bring your love loaf and pie donation to drop off under the church portico. Someone will be ready to collect your pies and love loaves from your vehicle.

We thank you very much! Together In Missions Team

Boy Scout Troop 80 Christmas Pointsettia and Wreath Sale

Troop 80 is having its annual poinsettia and wreath sale. Order forms are available in the Church office to fill out and payment is due at that time. Cash and checks made out to Troop 80 are accepted. Order forms and money need to be into the church office by Friday, November 20th. You can also reach out to Gary Taylor (586) 795-4630.



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

BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

We are going through difficult times. The Pandemic is consuming our thoughts and our lives. We are isolated, wondering about the holidays, wondering when normal will return. If that is not bad enough, we have gone through a dividing tumultuous election, the likes of which we have not seen before. We are upset, divided, and many are filled with anger. We have gone through bad times before, but this seems different, perhaps because those bad times drew us together and these bad times seem to be driving us apart. We need to remember who we are and who we belong to. There can be found blessings in bad times even if it is only an appreciation for the good times. Going through cancer was a bad time for me. I had done everything right, followed the right things, was tested often, followed Doctors orders, and yet there it was, Cancer. But from that time, I gained a greater appreciation for each day, for the life I had and for the love of the people around me. God had been good to me, he brought me out of a life of want and poverty to a life filled with blessings. I had to be grateful for that. He gave me more years than I ever thought possible but with it came challenges. With each challenge came gratitude that I could with God's help meet those challenges. Blessings received amid trials. We will see the blessings in this time of our lives, the blessing of each day, the trials that strengthen us, the sorrows that draw us closer to the Holy one. We will never again take the stocked shelves of a grocery store for granted, or the welcoming of our church building, or the teachers and schools, or the simple act of going out to eat. My parents had gone through the Great Depression, and I remember making fun of my Mother for putting a tiny portion of leftover food in the freezer, for canning when food was readily available in the market, for saving any and everything from paper bags to plastic containers. One time she ran over to the waste basket and took out a Cool Whip container that I had discarded and gave me a lecture on waste. She had lived through a time when there was no money to buy food, when a garden was a necessity, when clothes were worn until they could be mended no more and then served another purpose as rags for cleaning or material for something else. But despite the saving there was always enough to share with those who had nothing. She was a generous woman and never turned anyone away that was in need. Despite the hardship of a Depression there had been blessings in learning to do with less, in appreciation for what they had, for neighbor helping neighbor. Maybe our blessings will be not taking for granted what we have in this country, for being able to forgive and accept those who think and feel differently about an election, for remembering that all God's children are worthy of love and opportunity.

James 1:2-5 Consider it pure joy, my friends, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

Lord be with us during this time of discord and upheaval. May we be strengthened by our times and brought closer to you and to each other. Give us strength for the day and hope for tomorrow. Be with those who grieve the loss of a loved one or the grief of loss of job and income and hope and home. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry as he leads us through this difficult time, bless his word and guide him in his decisions. Be with our staff and leaders, strengthen them as we find ways to do church and to be the hands and feet of Christ. We thank you for each day you give us, may we use them wisely. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Drug Take Back Day Results

October 24, 2020 was our Drug Take Back Day. Here are the results. We collected 44.6 lbs of medications and liquids.

Here is a list of the other dates we collected medications:

10-2018 = 26 lbs. 4-2019 = 43 lbs.
10-2019 = unknown. So this past October was the best collection so far.

Christ Lutheran Church is collecting needles and drugs on 11-14 from 10am to 1pm. This collection is drive thru.

Thank you to everyone for your participation.

Janet Stone



Church Recess

As you have now read, Utica United Methodist Church is once again on recess. Worship Service will be available online on Sunday mornings at 9am. This will be a combined worship service and will include both styles of music to appeal to all of our members. You will find the service on our Facebook page, the website and on our YouTube channel.

Meetings have all been put on hold as well. We do have two Zoom licenses. This means if you need to host a meeting that is going to be an hour long, call the office and we can get you set up with access to Zoom. Zoom does have a free version that you can sign up and host a meeting that lasts half an hour.

The church office is still open during the week. Please let us know if we can help you in any way. We continue to update and send out the prayer list each week. Our pantry is open by appointment only. We can always use food donations. Call and ask how you can help.

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), 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.

Sunday Worship Times:

Find us on Facebook, Website
or YouTube channel for our
Sunday Worship Service at
9am.

At this time we are taking a
break from in person
gatherings. Please stay safe.
Stay home if you are sick.
Wear a mask when you go
out. Wash your hands or use
sanitizer often.

We will follow John Wesley's
summary of God's directives
to all people - **"Do No Harm,
Do Good and Stay in Love
with God!"**

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!