

Weekly Messenger

November 27, 2020

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Grace Sufficient

I think many people are having a different Thanksgiving season than usual. Many people missed not only family gatherings on Thanksgiving, but also our Thanksgiving luncheon at church, the Thanksgiving parade, black Friday shopping and many other meaningful traditions.

While this holiday has been quiet for me and I realize that the season of Thanksgiving has been different than I expected, I cannot stop finding gratitude for this year.

My gratitude for this year reminds me of the words, “Grace Sufficient” that comes from 2 Corinthians 12:9, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

I remember when I was looking for a church where I could gain new experiences back in June, but the UMC faced an uncertain situation due to COVID-19, so I had a fear of moving from a Korean church where I served as a children’s minister to a non-Korean church. It was a good opportunity, but it was also a risk.

Nevertheless, I had a desire to gain new experiences, to grow my ministerial skills, and to receive good supervising, so I asked God for this new opportunity, and God graciously opened the door for me to have an internship at Utica Church.

During this internship, sometimes, I wish I could have a children’s program every Wednesday as we had planned. I wish I could sing the hymns in the worship with the congregation, and I wish I could have more fellowship with Utica church members after service on Sunday.

However, I would say “grace sufficient” for my internship at Utica UMC.

Even though we are in the midst of a global pandemic, I have been blessed the most in my internship at Utica UMC. Utica UMC’s ministry is still active and I can see that the Utica family is united with the mission of the church. I give thanks to God for providing this great opportunity to internship here and to get to know Utica UMC more. Also, I want to thank Pastor Don, who helps me not only to increase my knowledge of ministry and theological application as my supervisor, but also, I can learn from his leadership and the heart he has for worship, for God’s people and for the church. I want to give thanks to Utica UMC’s family that has welcomed me and given me this great opportunity.

I found the note that contained my prayer request from when I started this internship. I prayed for God to provide the best place where I would learn, feel accepted and welcomed, and have a chance to grow.

God graciously answered my prayer.

Since I started my internship here, I have felt accepted, I have felt welcomed, and I have felt that I have learned here and have grown here. Thank God and thank you!

Happy Thanksgiving to all!
Ministry Intern, Sunhwa Hopgood

Utica United
Methodist Church

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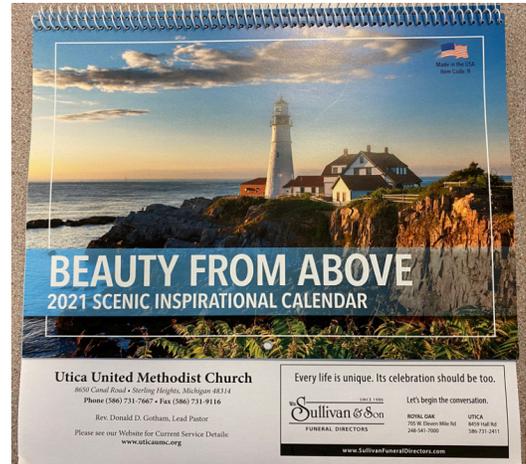
(586) 731-7667

www.UticaUMC.org

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

2021 Calendars

We have 2021 calendars available for pick up in the office that were provided by Sullivan Brothers Funeral Home. You may stop in to pick up a calendar during church office hours. There are available on a first come, first serve basis until supplies run out. Sorry, we are not able to mail these calendars.



2021 Offering Envelopes

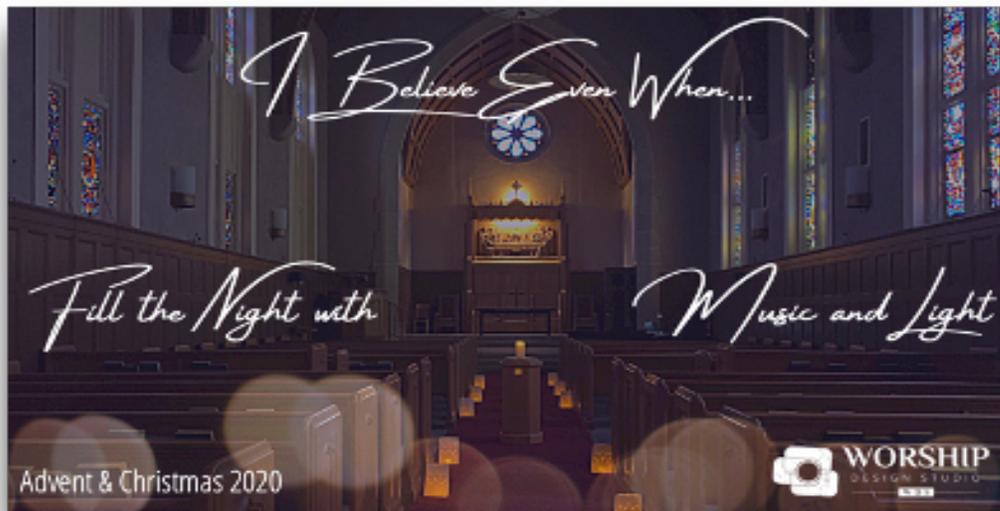
Your 2021 offering envelopes are ready and may be picked up in the office during regular office hours. The office is open from 8am-4pm Monday-Thursday and from 8am-2pm on Fridays. If you already know that you cannot make it in to pick up your envelope in person please contact the office by phone or e-mail charlotte@uticaumc.org and we can get those out in the mail to you. Envelopes not picked up by December 15th will be mailed out to you at that time.

Holiday Families

This year we are supporting 3 families in need of holiday gifts for their children. Due to the pandemic we are doing things differently. We are going to be collecting money from now until December 13th to purchase gift cards for the children. Their parents can then use the gift cards to get their kids the gifts they need. If you are interested in supporting these families please send in your donation and mark on the envelope "Friend In Need/Gifts." Let's bring hope and happiness to these children this year.



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



Sunday, November 29th marks the first Sunday in advent. We are kicking off the advent season with a new sermon series titled: "I Believe Even When..."

2020 has been a year full of surprises and challenges. There have been highs and lows, and while we seem to continually be traveling through the valley of shadows and doubt, I believe in our God. I believe there is hope and a light at the end of this never ending tunnel. I believe in the hope and anticipation that the Christmas season brings to our lives.

Christmas may look different this year. Thanksgiving too. We may be celebrating in smaller settings. We may be using Zoom calls and FaceTime to celebrate with our families instead of being all together in the same location. Thank God for technology, that we can still be together while being apart! Thank God for Amazon, online shopping and all of the delivery services available to us, during this season. Thank God that while everything is different, the reason for the season remains the same. God's Son, sent to earth to be born of the virgin, in a simple stable.

As you begin to decorate this year, remember to create an advent wreath. Maybe you have one already, maybe you need to be creative and find 5 candles from around your house. Put those candles out where you can see them. One candle should be in the middle, the Christ candle, the other four surrounding that candle. Each Sunday in advent, light one of the candles. If you can watch our online service, light your candle during that part of the service. If you are unable to watch our services, light the candle in the morning when church would normally happen. This week is the candle of hope. I believe with all my heart that there is Hope for this world, Hope for a better tomorrow and Hope that this pandemic will end.

**Sunday Service is available each week at 9am on YouTube, Facebook and our Website.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

THANKSGIVING

How do you have Thanksgiving during a Pandemic? It is always difficult for families to travel to get together, this year will be even more difficult. For many it will be a quiet day with no get together and for some there may not be a bountiful meal provided. We are having a far from usual Thanksgiving season. Stores are having sales ahead of time to avoid the crowds associated with Black Friday. I have never been a fan of crowds except at Church on Easter and Christmas and Baseball games but lining up and being crowded to shop, no just no. Thanksgiving has become all about the sales and the food and some have forgotten why we have Thanksgiving. It was begun as a day of giving thanks for the bountiful harvest. God had carried the Pilgrims through a difficult year and the harvest was good. This Thanksgiving will be difficult as we see the Pandemic worsening and numbers increasing even beyond what they were in the Spring. Will we be thankful for a year that has brought us economic difficulties, sickness, job loss, political upheaval, and especially the loss of loved ones? Once again, our church building is closed to protect all of us and this is hard. How do we remain thankful for that? Well, there are the lessons learned as we shift to recorded services and to the drawing together with phone calls, and the realization that we are more than a building. We will miss the gathering, but the love and caring will remain. Will our grace before the meal be one of gratitude? Will we humbly bow and thank our God for 2020? Will our thoughts be consumed by our sorrows? Will we thank God for the food before us, the home we abide in, the country we live in, the church in action, the blessings of our loved ones and the blessings of those that were loved and lost? Will we thank God for being with us and know that he has not deserted us, or will we ask where he has been? We have been assured that he is with us, that he will never leave us and that his love endures forever. Paul was in prison and he wrote to his friends at Philippi:

Philippians 4:12-13 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Oh, to be like Paul, grateful in all circumstances. As Saul he persecuted Christians, witnessed the stoning of Stephen, then on the road to Damascus met his savior and was changed and became new and was Paul. He was blinded and then could see clearly. He became a follower of Jesus.

Lord, we know you are with us in this time of sorrow, upheaval, and plague. We pray for an end to this virus that is attacking our world. Be with us as we offer our thanks for shelter, food and the love of friends and family. Be with those who are fighting this virus firsthand, the nurses and doctors and all those that work in the hospitals. Be with our country Lord, that we may be united. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry, guide him, and give him assurance and strength in all he does. Be with our Leaders and Staff, bless their work and give them guidance and strength. We thank you Lord for our days and our blessings. In Jesus name we pray, Amen

Grace Epperson



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Ministry Team:

Senior Pastor
Reverend Don Gotham
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Sunwha Hopgood

Contemporary Worship Leader

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Suzy Palmer
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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!