

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Christmas is Coming

Here we are once again steeped in the season of Advent, the coming of Christmas. The word Christmas actual meaning is rite or mass of Christ. The religious ceremonial celebration of Christ. It has become a time for gifts, Santa Claus, parties, and cookies. It is meant to be a religious ceremony. The celebration of the birth of a Savior. The birth of the most holy one, Jesus Christ. This year will be different. There will be no gathering in Church on Christmas Eve. There will be no family gatherings until the virus weakens. The expectation is that this will be a hard winter. The number of cases is expected to climb, the death toll to mount. We will once again be asked to not gather, to not be with our families. Thanksgiving was hard, we, when there was a we, had often spent a holiday with just the two of us and this year I received phone calls, zoom calls, text messages and it was okay but I miss the touch, the hugs. I fixed a special meal, ate far too many cranberries, had my favorite ice cream for dessert, watched the virtual parade. Christmas Eve was always our time with family, and I will miss that most of all. Big dinner, church, open gifts. Our routines will be strange, but it will be okay. We can do this. It will be hard, but we must do what is necessary and look forward to a time when we can resume our normal lives when the virus is under control. I think my most favorite Christmas Eve was when, on our way home from Church, our children became very excited in the car and began saying 'There's the star.' Indeed, in the sky was the brightest star I had ever seen. I was so happy that they had focused on the star that night and had not even mentioned gifts and Santa and reindeer. They were excited about a star that had signaled the birth of a baby. A baby that would become their Savior, a baby that they would carry with them their whole lives. I pray that we will remember the reason for Christmas. The birth of the Christ child.

In the bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone, snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long time ago. What can I give him poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; If I were a wise man, I would do my part; Yet, what I can I give him: Give my heart.

In the Bleak Midwinter by Christina G. Rossetti

Lord we thank you for this season of Advent. May we not become so busy with the preparations that we forget the reason. Lord, help us through this pandemic. Our country is in chaos, we are divided, help us to come together with a common purpose and remember who and whose we are. Be with our Pastor and his family, keep them safe and bless his ministry. Be with our leaders and staff, grant them your guidance and safety. Be with our families, may they feel your comfort. Be with those who are sick and those that grieve, bless them. Lord we thank you for our blessings, for the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the shelter of our homes. May we who have everything, remember those who have nothing. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson



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## New Endowment Charter

After a conversation with the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan we were told that our method of spending only dividend income was considered very antiquated. It has been years since our current Endowment Charter was updated so the committee felt it was time to make some changes. The basic purpose will not be changed, the Fund will still be used to further our church ministries.

The major change is the spending option. Currently the Charter says we can spend the dividend income, which usually comes out to about 2% of the principal. Under the new charter we will be able to spend up to 5%. The Endowment Committee will decide each year the % that will be spent, always making sure the principal is protected. If you have any questions about the new charter please contact one of the committee members.

Al Manning (Chair), David Clark, Fran Leo, Bob Mowers, Tim & Barb Fisher

**A Special Charge Conference has been called for Sunday, December 20th at 3pm. This will be done using Zoom. An e-mail invite will go out to the congregation before Sunday, December 20th with the Zoom information.**

## Office Closings

The office will be closed on December 24th - Christmas Eve and December 25th - Christmas Day.

The office will be open until noon on December 31st to accept any end of year offerings for 2020. E-giving received before Midnight on the 31st will be for 2020. Any other offerings received after noon that are not e-giving will be counted for 2021.

The office is closed January 1st - New Years Day.

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## 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!