



# Weekly Messenger

January 22, 2021

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## "The Power of the Tongue"

A post on Facebook by a friend this morning struck a chord with me. Unfortunately, it wasn't a welcome chord. This particular post was from a Christian friend, and it was aimed at tearing others down. My heart began to hurt for those my friend intended to hurt and for my friend who felt compelled to try to tear others down.

I began to think of two verses from Proverbs that a Sunday School teacher helped me hold onto years ago. The verses were easy to remember since they contained the same numbers in a different order. The first is Proverbs 12:18, and it reads, "Rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." The second is Proverbs 18:21, and it reads, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits. Hint: Take a look at both chapters. They each contain a bit more on the matter of using our tongues wisely.

I think each of us knows of people who have prospered or withered because of the words spoken to them. I think of the teachers who encouraged me and how their words lifted me to strive harder and achieve more. I also think of those who spoke in critical terms and tones, not to help me evaluate but tear me down. Had I taken the latter to heart, I could have been left with a crushed spirit.

Jesus had something to say about the power of the tongue, as well. In Matthew 12:37, we read, "for by your words you will be justified, and by your words, you will be condemned." Jesus wants us to consider the words we speak and know their impact on us and others.

Let us be wise enough to know when to speak (or post on social media) and when to hold our tongue.

May the Peace and Encouragement of the Holy Spirit be Yours!

Rev. Don

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# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## WARMING CENTER

### Starts Next Week!!!

This year, our church will host the Warming Center during the week of 1/24/21. However, there will be unique changes this year, first being that we will NOT be housing any guests at our church. (The Warming Center and McRest have formed an alliance this year to assure the homeless are taken care of, and received a COVID grant from Macomb County to provide housing assistance to our guests for this year.) Guests will be provided shelter at a hotel near the McRest facility at NO cost to our church. The various volunteer churches will be responsible to provide a cold breakfast and lunch, placed in a single bag and delivered to the McRest facility. We will not be responsible for the cost nor the preparations for dinner.

The following are other pertinent details: All food for these bagged meals will be purchased and bagged by Bob and Debbie's kitchen team. We are requesting donations of money to allow us the flexibility to purchase items needed as information comes in on which combinations work best. At this time we are being asked to feed 120 guests per day.

How you can help:

Donate Money! You can donate through your mailed offering by writing Warming Center on the line or through e-giving and select Warming Center to make your donation. All money given will be used in the purchase of the needed food items to bag for the guests.

Volunteer your time! We need people to come and help put together the bags of food. The hope is to have five volunteers per day. Food preparation will be daily starting Sunday 1-24-21 starting at 9am until the last day Saturday 1-30-21. Safe distancing and face masks will be required. Please contact Bob MacKool at [rgmackool@gmail.com](mailto:rgmackool@gmail.com) to volunteer – please indicate all days available to help in your e-mail.

## Blood Drive

There is a blood drive scheduled for Tuesday, February 9, 2021 between 12:00 - 6:00 pm in Fellowship Hall. Appointments must be made ahead of time through the Red Cross. Go to [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) to schedule your appointment. If you do not have access to a computer or internet please contact Al Manning (586) 463-0298 and he can help get you an appointment.



**American  
Red Cross**

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## 2020 Together-In-Mission Summary For the Utica United Methodist Church

The year 2020 has been a true challenge for the entire world. Praise God for being there with us every day! We are grateful for His love and the peace of knowing that He is in control.

At Utica UMC, the missions team is called Together In Mission (TIM). TIM started the year with a change of leadership as our former leader for 6 years moved to the church Leadership Board. The team immediately started planning a full year of mission support activities for every month of the year. Our first focus was to support the Methodist Children's Home Society of Michigan with a drive to collect personal hygiene items for the residents at the Home. In preparation for announcement of the drive to the congregation, it was learned that the reason for creation of the Children's Home was due to a pandemic in 1918 that left many children without parents. Ironically, our first newsletter article about the history of the Methodist Children's Home was published the first week of March, just prior to the "Stay At Home" order issued by Michigan's Governor. Needless to say, all activity was paused while the order was in effect.

During April, an Easter Offering letter was circulated to the congregation requesting donations to support our pledges to missionaries Randy Hildebrant and Temba Nkomozepi. The congregational support was fantastic with contributions exceeding 2019 by over 40%. In June, it was decided to re-start our personal hygiene collection drive for the Methodist Children's Home Society (MCHS). As "drive-in" church services were held in our parking lot, the TIM team set up collection bins for items to be dropped off after service. With the shared experience of searching for hygiene supplies during a pandemic, Utica UMC congregants responded with a huge donation to the MCHS that were delivered in August.

About mid-year, TIM received a new member to the team, Sunhwa Hopgood serving Utica UMC as an intern from the Korean Methodist Church in Troy. We welcome her unique insights and contributions to our mission efforts, along with her devotion to our Lord, Jesus.

Due to the delays in executing our initial mission plans for 2020, our next focus was to solicit donations for "wish list" items to support Cass Community Services and Baldwin Center. A mid-September collection was held to provide staples for lunches and take-out meals served by the missions. Once again the response was tremendous and donations were delivered later that month.

During October, Utica UMC traditionally focuses on Love Loaf donations to support our mission pledges. As weekly worship service returned to online only, activity once again was delayed but congregational support remained strong. Collection results again exceeded last year and we are grateful for continued support of our mission pledges during such a difficult period.

In November, Utica UMC provided 57 pies for serving at the Baldwin Center's Thanksgiving Meal. For over 30 years this partnership has been in existence. Once again, the people of Pontiac are fed with love by our mission partners who rely on us, their supporters, to provide for their clientele.

Finally, in December a Christmas Offering Letter was sent to the congregation requesting donations to complete our pledged 2020 support to missions. With heart, the Utica UMC congregants surprised the team by exceeding our pledges for the year by over 7%! Who would have guessed that our mission plans for 2020 would be successful during a pandemic. Only God would expect such high results from His people. Praise God for His faithful guidance and the obedient response of His servants at Utica UMC.

Thank you,

UUMC Together In Mission (TIM)

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## LESSONS LEARNED

2020 is now officially over by almost a month. What did I learn last year? I hope I learned a new appreciation for the everyday things we take for granted. Like sitting in church, going out to eat, going to a movie theater, a trip to the grocery store, going to a department store, breathing without a mask covering my face, not panicking when someone gets too close to me at the meat counter, having friends over, going on jaunts to different places, staying home because I want to not because I have to, and the most important seeing my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. I know it's not over yet, and that I have to take the next step and get the vaccine as soon as I can get an appointment, that we will continue with mask wearing for some time, that we will have to be socially distanced and that there will be restrictions on places we gather but we are in the home stretch (I have missed baseball) and it will be restrictive for a while, but we can get through this. When I had cancer and was told I would have to have 3 months of chemotherapy, I thought, okay, I can do 3 months. I prayed for strength. The 3 months went by and the doctor said, 6 months would be better, okay, only 3 more months and I again prayed for strength. As I neared the end of the 6 months, the doctor came in and said, 9 months would be better, I said okay but I was becoming weary, I had sores in my mouth, and I was becoming so tired that I would work on the day of chemo but had to take the next day off which was a Friday and so had 3 days off. At the end of 9 months the doctor came in and we went over my body's response according to my physical response and the blood work and finally agreed that I had had enough. I had been praying about this for the last 3 months, what to do if the doctor tried once again to extend it. I felt my energy, my appetite, my strength diminishing day by day, my veins were becoming difficult. My prayer life was strong, and my faith had grown but I did not want to live a half life. God had brought me thus far, but my physical strength was going. As we have had the plateaus and surges of this year with the Covid 19 Virus I have been reminded of that year from diagnosis to finishing chemo and I have relied on the lesson learned that it will be over eventually, we just have to take it one day at a time, (unfortunately that requires remembering what day it is). But I realized then and more so now, that God was my strength in getting through chemo and the worry and fears that it brought. So, I remember "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." So, I will keep calling to get the vaccine, I will keep being isolated, I will endure because I know my God is with me and he will strengthen and uphold me and with him we can persevere.

Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we are surrounded with such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles us and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus. The author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Lord, thank you for this day, for the promise of tomorrow, and for all our yesterdays. Be with those that are ill, and those that mourn, those who are weary, those that hunger for your word. Bless our Pastor and bless his ministry, be with our church as we seek to be the hands and feet of Christ. Be with our staff and leaders Lord, show them your path. In Jesus name, 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

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.

## 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](http://www.uticaumc.org/e-giving)**

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