



Weekly Messenger

January 8, 2021

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" 'Tis the Season... I guess"

As I write to you today, I have come across two emails that appear to be from our bishop. Neither email is actually from the bishop. Both fake emails were someone's attempt to use the bishop's good name to get me to purchase gift cards. I know our bishop would not do this.

This morning I was also alerted by two people from our church who indicated someone sent them an email that looked like I had sent it. I had not. The thieves are becoming craftier, even going so far as to quote scripture.

Please, whether you receive such an email that seems as if it is coming from me or from anyone else you know, check out the email address before you even consider responding. I do not have a "Gmail" email account. I do not have an email account that includes numbers. I promise I won't ask you to purchase gift cards. Lastly, if you are unsure, please call the office to inquire if the email is genuine.

I am writing to you on Thursday, which means it is the day after people stormed the nation's Capitol. While I took a late lunch yesterday, I watched the events unfold on television and was stunned. I know the election of November was contentious. I know the season we are all dealing with of Covid-19 restrictions are causing many problems and is stressing many people. So much of what we've been through in the last year has brought frayed nerves to many.

As those who follow Christ, let us be the people who begin our response to stress with prayer. Let us find the way of Christ through the leading of the Holy Spirit. Let us choose not to throw gas of any kind on what seems to be a lit match, but be the soft-voiced, steady friend everyone so desperately needs in this season.

Grace, Peace, Love, and Faith,

Rev. Don

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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

WARMING CENTER

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 to volunteer – please indicate all days available to help in your e-mail.

Stephen Ministry Opportunity

Have you ever thought about being a Stephen Minister? Have you heard about Stephen Ministry but not sure what it is all about? Now is your chance to find out. Stephen Ministry is now offering online training classes.

Stephen Ministry is now offering a live, interactive online training class for Stephen Ministry Leaders.

The class consists of:

- About 20 participants
- 10 sessions of 2-1/2 hours each, spaced over five or ten weeks, with the options of morning, afternoon, or evening sessions
- An engaging blend of teaching methods - presentations, group discussions, videos, skill practices, breakout activities, question-and-answer times, and more.

For a 3-minute video, FAQs, sample schedule, and more, visit stephenministries.org/bridge.

Please contact Sheila Manning if you have an interest in becoming a Stephen Ministry Leader - phone 586 463-0298, email manningsk@comcast.net.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

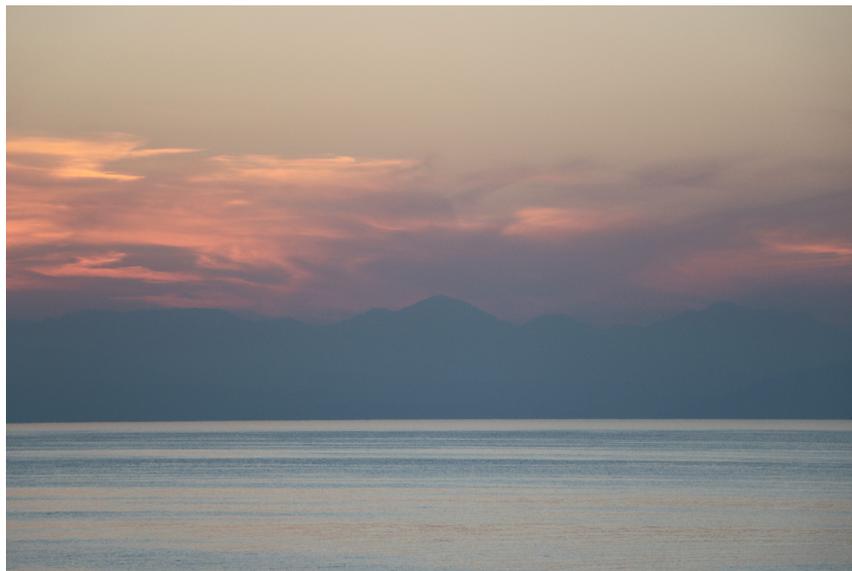
A NEW BEGINNING

A new beginning, the start of a new year. A time to let go of the past and begin anew. Many people make New Year's resolutions. I gave up on that a long time ago. I just end up failing, disappointed in myself, and feeling like a loser. Why is it so difficult to keep those resolutions? I have made other commitments and kept them. I have dieted and kept weight off for many years before, until temptation and lack of exercise overcame my resolve. I have joined a fitness club and attended faithfully until fate intervened, I have budgeted money and saved for something special or paid off a debt with no problem. But New Year's resolutions have always failed me, or I have failed them. Perhaps it should not be something for myself. Perhaps it should be about others. A time to heal that relationship, a time to reach out to others, a time to renew friendships, a time to apologize. I have a friend that has been a friend since Nurses training, over 60 some years but we have communicated by letters once a year and have not seen each other for over 50 years and have not talked on the phone for over 35 years. She called me a week ago because I had written about the death of my husband. It was like there had been no time that had passed. Like picking up a conversation that you had just had, and it was so good. I regretted that we had not talked more often. We talked about old times, her love of egg white and my love of yolk and how we now eat the whole egg. In Nurses Training we would split our eggs. We laughed and talked about those times and about now being Grandmothers. I thought of all the time wasted and what if one of us had been the one that died. We would have missed this chance to reconnect, to recall a friendship that had sustained us both. We had once laughed together, cried together, and worked toward a common goal together. It is a friendship that has withstood time, distance, and life. I am ashamed that I was not the one to reach out. How many others have I let slide away? A New Year should be a new beginning, a time to reach out to someone who has hurt us, or we have hurt, a time to let go of family squabbles, a time to let go of arguments and estrangement, and a time to reconnect with those who have touched our lives.

Lamentations 3:22-23 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lord, we thank you that every day is a new beginning, that you give us another chance to get it right. We ask your blessing on those we love, be with our Pastor and bless his ministry and keep his family safe. We ask your mercy on those that are suffering from this pandemic that engulfs us. Be with those that have suffered loss and those that are ill. Be with our staff and leaders, grant them your guidance and protection. Our country is in turmoil, people are suffering, many are hungry, and some are facing loss of homes. Help us Lord to set aside the politics and focus on the need and how we can each help others. Be with us and guide us and teach us your lessons. 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

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!