



# Weekly Messenger

February 26, 2021

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## "Will They Know?"

This week, we continue our Forty Days of Love, Season of Love, emphasizing our journey through Lent. Last week I wrote to share with you some thoughts on "Storge" love. This week I want to focus on "Phileo" love. Many of us have already heard of "Phileo" love. It is brotherly love. It is the kind of love shown to those who are not related to us, yet our care for them runs deep. It is a love we show to others to demonstrate how important and cherished they are to us. Phileo love is the love scripture calls us to show our neighbors.

In helping his listeners to understand maturity in Christianity, Paul counsels the Romans: <sup>9</sup>Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup>love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor." The love called for here is Phileo love. Focusing on these verses through this lens adds a new dimension

Imagine if we sang, "And they'll know we are Christians by loving one another with the kind of love we have for our own family and outdoing one another in showing honor." It would surely change the song, but it would also ramp up our grasp of what God is asking of us and call us to a more resolute way of being a follower of Christ.

Jesus expressed this kind of love in the story of the raising of Lazarus in John 11. When Jesus joined in the crying and mourning over the death of Lazarus, one of the people who witnessed the scene remarked of Jesus' emotional display, saying, "Look how he loved him." The word used for love in this situation was "Phileo."

How is it going for you? Do you have a story to tell of how your simple acts of love have surprised you? I would love to hear about it. Send me an email, or give me a call - I would love to know.

Yes, They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love,

Rev. Don

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# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

February

T.S. Eliot said that April is the cruelest month, but my vote goes to February. The weather is cold and miserable, and our weather forecasts are not always accurate, so we have surprises. We once had 12 inches of predicted partly cloudy in our driveway. That was a surprise. The only February I enjoyed was the year we went on a cruise and had 14 days of sunshine and blue waters. That was a good February. My Mother was born in February 111 years ago this month, she also died in February 1978, 10 days before her 68<sup>th</sup> birthday. February always seems like a long month although it is the shortest month. Our hearts and minds have been on Texas this week as they have suffered through the Winter weather with power outages and the loss of even water. We once had a well for water and when we lost power, we lost water. We could manage the cold with the fireplace and a space heater in the Family room, but the loss of water was difficult. We also had an electric stove and so could not cook but managed to obtain food and to refrigerate by utilizing the garage for storage. When we had an ice storm hit we rented a hotel room for showers, we had two teenagers who could not wash their hair for a week, and the drama had reached epic proportions. This is the last week of February and we have had Ash Wednesday and now we begin to prepare ourselves for Easter. I am looking forward with a hopeful heart to being back in the Sanctuary for Easter. This has been a long spell but Spring and hope and the risen Christ are coming. We will soon be able to gather for worship and what a blessing that will be to see the familiar faces, to sing the familiar hymns, to hear the sermon in person, to once again be in community. Thanks be to God.

Song of Solomon 2:11-12 (KJV) For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

We thank you Lord for this Winter because we know it brings the promise of Spring. Be with us in these dark and harsh times, give us your hope and peace. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve. Be with our brothers and sisters in Texas as they go through this difficult time. Be with those who are homeless and those who are hungry and those suffering financial loss due to this pandemic. Be with our Pastor, bless his Ministry and be with his family. Be with our leaders, give them your patience and give them wisdom. May we go through this difficult and lengthy time resting on your assurance that you are with us and that you do not leave us alone. In Jesus name, Amen.

Grace Epperson

## Covid-19 Vaccine Hotline

Individuals who do not have access to the internet or need further assistance navigating the website can contact the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136. Call specialists are available to help you find information about vaccination in your area and to schedule an appointment, if available.

Information around the coronavirus pandemic is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus).

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Ministry Team:

Senior Pastor  
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Ministry Leader Intern  
**Sunwha Hopgood**

Contemporary Worship Leader  
**Mer Renne**  
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Music Ministry  
**David Fox**  
Organist, Hand Bell & Chancel  
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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](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!