

# Weekly Messenger

May 21, 2021

## IN THIS ISSUE:

STARS/  
Graduation  
Sunday/  
Honoring  
Veteran's

TIM/Altar  
Flowers

Devotional

Back Page  
Info

## "Thank You"

Goodbyes are hard, but your farewell wishes are very encouraging and meaningful. Thank you so much for your thoughtful gifts and words. I feel so loved and special.

In recent years, I have wondered what does God's promise mean when I moved from Korea to here. 2001 was a big year in my life. My uncle who is half Korean and who was adopted to the U.S. when he was 10 years old, asked me and my sister to come to Michigan to study and gain new experiences. I took this faith journey because when I prayed, God gave me a promise through Genesis 28:15, "I am with you and I will watch over you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land and I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

I have understood all of Genesis 28:15, but I keep wondering about the meaning of "I will bring you back to this land."

Does it mean I will move back to Korea someday? However, it is getting hard to move back to Korea. This is my home for me and my family, and it is not more comfortable to live in Korea, except that I could see my parents, my sisters and my home church.

Last Sunday, I received a gift that is so meaningful from Utica UMC's family. It was handwritten letters collected into one album. I think I am not used to receiving handwritten letters since coming to America. I used to often receive or write handwritten letters with Korean friends, but I thought Americans only write their name on letters or cards.

This surprise gift reminded me of the handwritten letters which my church friends wrote and put in one album when I left Korea in 2001. I remember I read it with tears on the airplane and I missed my church friends. I received the same gift 20 years later from you.

It helps me to understand God's promise that 'here' is the land God had promised me when I left my land. The promise, "I will bring you back to this land", means that is not a geographical place, but a place of the spirit. The promised land is the place where all Christians are called by God, and are gathering to worship God and join in ministry together. Thank you for making it clear; this is a wonderful gift.

In a short time from now I will be starting a new journey with the same promise. I am praying and looking forward to worshipping God, and sharing in God's mission and ministry together at Washington UMC. Even though I will be serving at this new church, you have let me know that we will still be together in the Promised Land.

In Christ's love,  
Sunhwa Hopgood

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## High School and College Graduates

On Sunday June 6th at 9am we will be recognizing our High School and College Graduates! If you have a graduate and have not been contacted by the church office, please call us with your graduate's information so they will be included in our service.



## Honoring our Veterans

Are you a military veteran? If you are new to our church, we would like to add you to our honor's booklet that will be printed for Sunday service on May 30th. Please contact the church office by Tuesday, May 25th with your branch of service and years served and we will honor your on this special day.



## STARS/XCEL

We will once again be having our summer STARS and XCEL program at Utica United Methodist Church. Due to COVID it will be a **Virtual** program this year. The program runs for 6 weeks from June 14-July 22. Bags will be delivered to those within 7 miles of the church with the rest of the bags to be picked up by 3pm on Mondays. These bags will have informational materials, snacks, craft supplies and maybe some other surprise for the week. They will have an optional zoom meeting time and will have some YouTube videos for the kids. Flyers will be mailed out in the next couple of weeks. Registration will be available in the flyer as well as on our website.

For the STARS program, children must be 7 years old by June 14th to be part of the program. If you have children or grandchildren who might be interested in attending, you can always call the office to make sure they get put on the mailing list to receive the flyer.

# Register Now!

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## “Ministry With” – What is our Role?

When you think about missions, what thoughts come to mind? Do you find yourself confused by the many references to the mission field? What “missions” would Jesus support? What is God’s mission for us?

As we grow in our faith, our focus transitions from inward emphasis to outreach. We are called to share the Good News with others in response to the grace we have received from our Father God. Missions provide the opportunity to support others, sharing our faith through our gifts and service. Our culture has conditioned us to be generous in our giving and our servanthood, but how do we truly reach others with the love of our savior Jesus Christ?

Engage<sup>mi</sup> is the mission engagement program for the Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church. Engage<sup>mi</sup> challenges Michigan Conference congregations to comprehensive missional learning, giving, and action with the goal of encouraging congregations to shift from transactional “ministry to” models to relational “ministry with” vulnerable people and communities.

“Ministry with” is the foundational concept for the Engage<sup>mi</sup> program. Based on The United Methodist Church’s “Ministry with the Poor” Area of Focus, “ministry with” is grounded in Jesus’ practice of ministry, and our Wesleyan heritage. It is an invitation to move from models of “ministry to” into models of “ministry with.”

“Ministry to” is defined as mission and ministry programs that merely “give to” or “do for” people. These programs can be highly efficient in distributing materials and resources to address immediate basic needs of food, water, clothing, and shelter. However, they can also create a hierarchy of “givers” over “receivers,” foster systems and relationships of dependency, and treat “givers” as saviors having all the resources and answers and the “receivers” as objects of charity and problems to be fixed. In contrast, “ministry with” seeks not only to meet immediate needs, but, also, to foster mutual relationships where all participants are met with dignity, engaged in shared leadership, and growing together in God’s love. It is a challenge for all of us to prioritize people over programs, relationships over resources, and development of long-term solutions over quick fixes.

The Engage<sup>mi</sup> mission and ministry projects, here in Michigan and around the world, are all seeking to respond to this invitation. The goal of Engage<sup>mi</sup> is to encourage Utica UMC to partner with these projects and to meet the challenge of being in “ministry with” people in your congregation and your local community.

As we gradually return to “normal life” after a pandemic, we will be looking forward to a “new life” where God’s purpose for us becomes our passion. During this year, TIM will help Utica UMC to learn more about our mission partners and how we can “engage with” those who are in need. We ask for HIS guidance as we learn more about the community that we share. Let our hearts feel HIS love as we discover our purpose for serving HIS will.

Together-In-Mission (TIM)

### Altar Flowers

Altar Flowers are available again for the 9:00am Worship Service

If you would like to reserve a vase of flowers, just contact the office by phone, in person, or via email to [charlotte@uticaumc.org](mailto:charlotte@uticaumc.org) with your requested date and if they are in honor or memory of a person or event (birthday, anniversary, etc.). The cost is still \$20 per vase. You may put the money in with your offering or drop the funds off to the office. Your information will appear in the Bulletin.

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Off the Path

There was a story of a woman who was hiking the Appalachian Trail. She had wandered off the path. She became lost and could not find her way back. She decided to stay where she was in the hopes that someone would find her. She ran out of provisions and eventually died waiting to be rescued. She had wandered about 2 miles from the path and gave up and never tried to find the way back to the path. I read this and thought of the times I had wandered away from the path laid out for my life. When I was in Junior High, I was going through an extremely rough time. My Brother had died, I had had Polio, I had missed a lot of school and was depressed. I had no friends, my best friend since birth, had found other friends because I was not in school that much. She was hanging with a rough group. I found myself not bad enough for the bad kids and not good enough for the good kids. I became a loner. I was failing. When I was going from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to 9<sup>th</sup>, I was passed on condition that my grades and attendance improve. A teacher that I absolutely disliked, was talking to me about what was happening and asked me a very pointed question. She asked me, "What do you want to do with your life?" In that moment I realized that I had choices, I could continue the path I was on and continue to fail, or I could get back on the road I had been on before all of this happened. I told her I wanted to be a Nurse and she encouraged me to work for it. I chose to try. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade my grades and attendance improved but teachers were looking at a subpar student and graded at times accordingly. I knew I had to prove that I was worth more than C's and occasional B's. In 10<sup>th</sup> grade I helped form and led a Future Nurses Club and was able to look into my dream further and my grades continued to improve to B's but in 11<sup>th</sup> grade it began to be all A's and I knew I was going to be okay. In 12<sup>th</sup> I had all A's and teachers were giving me other students to help. I had friends once again, not my lifelong friend, she quit school and was married at 16 but good friends that continue till this day. God placed a teacher in my path who knew the right question to ask me. A question that made me look to the future and what I wanted. A question that made me find my path again. I thank God for that teacher and her simple question "What do you want to do with your life?"

Psalm 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light for my path.

Lord, we thank you for those people you have placed in our path who have led us out of dark and lonely places. Be with those who are ill, those who are suffering the effects of the Pandemic, those who are grieving. Be with our Pastor, bless his Ministry and watch over his family. Be with our Staff and Leaders, bless them and guide them. Help us Lord to speak the words that bring others closer to you. Be with our church, guide us, help us to be the hands and feet of Christ. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Grace Epperson



# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Ministry Team:

Senior Pastor  
**Reverend Don Gotham**  
srpastor@uticaumc.org

## 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

## 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. We are also allowing groups to meet inside once again. Please call the office to either set up a Zoom meeting or to schedule an in-person meeting.

## Sunday Worship Times:

### In Person Worship

9am -Organ/Hymns in  
Sanctuary

10:30am - Praise Team in  
Fellowship Hall

### Online Worship

A blended recorded service  
will be available online on  
Facebook, Website and  
Youtube Sunday mornings at  
9am.

Children's Message online on  
YouTube, Facebook and  
Website by 9am Sunday's.

### 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!