



Weekly Messenger

June 4, 2021

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"Investing"

As I write today, I have in mind the wedding rehearsal I will lead tonight. The couple are not from our church. We have spent many hours together through the Zoom platform for pre-marital counseling. We've talked about the ceremony in depth. They've made choices regarding the ways the ceremony can be more personalized for their situation. With the things I've learned from them through our time together and the personalizations of the ceremony, I am now thinking of the message I will bring them at the wedding.

As a pastor, when you begin the journey of helping a couple to be best prepared to take and honor their wedding vows, you don't always know how things will turn out. Some couples aren't suited to be married, and some aren't suited to marry the person they plan to wed. Some couples are an obvious match and come ready to soak up all of the wisdom and advice a pastor has to offer. Such is the case with the two who will marry tomorrow.

This investing of my time into pre-marital counseling reminds me of our call as a church to invest ourselves in the lives of the people of our community. None of us knows when we invest ourselves in someone else precisely how things will turn out. Some folks will be open to what we have to share, and some will be open only after some things get sorted out, and others will reject what we can offer.

It reminds me of the parable of the sower of the seed from Matthew 13. We can't always know the condition of the soil before we spread the seed. Further, if we don't invest ourselves in spreading the seeds of faith, we deny the Holy Spirit opportunities to grow deep roots of faith in precious lives.

I believe God is calling us to be people who choose to partner with the Holy Spirit and invest in the lives of those who comprise our community. Sometimes it turns out just wonderfully, and like pre-marital counseling, it brings enough positive experiences to spur the courage and commitment to give it another go.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Don

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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

STARS/XCEL

We still have openings for children interested in being a part of the STARS program this year. If you know any children please pass along info about the summer program or have them call the church office to get more information. Registration forms available in the office or online in the Kidzone on the website.

STARS needs your support. Please consider the STARS program when you give to the church. Any extra that you can give to STARS will be helpful. Donate online by selecting STARS/XCEL or write STARS on the giving line of your envelope.

Snack donations are also welcome. We ask that all snacks be shelf stable, individually packaged and peanut free. You can bring in donations starting this week to either the office during normal office hours or look for a rolling cart or tub on Sunday mornings near the coat racks at the entrances.

8oz. water bottles

Juice boxes - apple or fruit punch

Kool-aid or Capri Sun pouches

Cheez-Its

Crackers

Cookies

Chips

Goldfish

Pretzels

Fruit Snacks

Applesauce or Fruit Cups

Red Cross Blood Drive

The next blood drive at UUMC will be on Tuesday, June 22nd from 12:00 - 5:45. To make an appointment you can either contact the Red Cross (1-800-733-2767 or website www.redcrossblood.org) or call Al Manning at 586-463-0298.

Volunteer(s) are needed. If you can't donate blood but would like to help, contact Al Manning. You can volunteer for any amount of time, you don't have to stay for the entire blood drive. Help is needed in the canteen area. You would pass out beverages and goodies to those after they have donated. Let AL know when you want to volunteer and he will put together a schedule.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

UMW June Meeting

The United Methodist Women would like to invite all women of our church to attend the UMW meeting on Wednesday, June 9. Each lady should bring a bag lunch and drink to Fellowship Hall at noon. Our program will be "**The Sacred Space of Prayer**" beginning at 1:00pm. We will be collecting a prayer offering to send to the National UMW Organization. We also look forward to discussing plans for next fall. See you there!

UMW Collection for Abigayle Ministries

The United Methodist Women will be collecting diapers in size 6 and baby wipes beginning in June and continuing until September 5th to benefit Abigayle Ministries. Look for the UMW bin in the narthex. Donations can be brought on Sunday mornings or during normal church business hours.

Amazon Smile

Utica United Methodist Church is a part of Amazon Smile. AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at smile.amazon.com on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones. When you shop with AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. Make sure to select Utica United Methodist Church as your charitable organization when you shop.

Online Recorded Service Changes

May 30th was the last Sunday for our online children's message. We are going to take a "vacation" from our weekly Children's Message videos and emails over the summer. There are still lots of fun ways for you to continue to learn about God and His great love for each one of us – ALL summer long. You can sign up for our 6-week STARS and XCEL summer programs which includes a weekly delivery of snacks, activities, and all the materials you need. You can watch any of the Children's Message videos on our YouTube Channel. And, you might even try opening your Bible to a random page each day and reading one or two of the verses on that page. You will be AMAZED what you can discover. We hope you have a FANTASTIC SUMMER!

The online recorded worship service will also be changing. We have been pre-recording the services and putting them online each week. Due to upcoming vacations we will be posting service a week later. June 6th service will appear on June 13th and so forth. The service will be recorded during the actual Sunday morning worship service and will be posted for the following week.

In Person Worship

As Covid restrictions ease so does the restrictions inside the church building. Please join us for worship as you feel comfortable. We have eased the social distance guidelines so all the pews are now open in the sanctuary. There is more space to spread out if you feel the need to sit apart from others. We are not requiring masks inside the building, but you are free to wear a mask if you choose to do so. Service times are 9am in the Sanctuary and 10:30am in Fellowship Hall.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Trust

During the sermon on Sunday when Rev. Gotham was speaking about John Wesley and his conversion I was reminded of my favorite quote of John and Charles Wesley. Charles was elated and happy and expressed this by saying, "If God but give me wings, I would fly!" John replied, "If God bids me fly, I will trust him for the wings!" Both statements were indications of the trust they experienced with God. They trusted in all things. When I do my daily prayers, I tend to be repetitive, reminding God with each prayer to hold those I love in his hands, to bless each day, to make me better. I tend to not turn it over but to keep harping on the same things. I am sure God forgives me and I have learned to pray for each day, knowing that the future is uncertain. When I was diagnosed with Cancer, I learned the importance of each day's prayer because I did not know what the news would be tomorrow. It seemed like an avalanche of bad news, with hopes rising and then falling but always God's arms were catching me and giving me hope. It started as I was in the O.R. waiting to have a lump removed. The Doctor told me that the results were back on the mammogram, and everything was fine. I thought, "Then why am I here?" but we had discussed this lump, and both were adamant that it needed to be removed so we went ahead and removed the lump. When I awoke, the Doctor was telling me it was malignant and all I could say was, "I'm really surprised." We then met in the post-surgical area where he told me he had reserved an O.R. room for Monday, this was Thursday, and I was to call him on Friday and let him know what I wanted done, nothing or radical surgery. I began to pray for each day, just get me through it and let me make the right decisions. I had to learn to trust where God was leading me. I prayed that my decisions would allow me to see children settled with those to love them, and if possible, Grandchildren. But God had a different plan, he would use this for good. I changed, with a greater appreciation for each day and expressed that in my prayers. Some people say, "Thank God for Friday," I said, "Thank God for this day" even Mondays. Sometimes the world is hurtful and sad, but one thing remains, God's love for his children. Someone once asked me if I still believed in God now that I had cancer. I was shocked and said that God did not give me cancer, that errant cells in my body had given me cancer, but God had used it to bring me even closer to him. My prayers each day were not to change the results but to give me strength for the day and courage for the journey. Thanks be to God.

Matthew 14:15-31 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you" Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus... But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord save me" immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

Thank you, Lord, for the times in our lives when you have held us in your loving arms, those times when you gave us strength to get us through. Thank you for our church, our Pastor, our Staff and Leaders. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry, may he feel your love and the love of those he serves daily. Be with our Staff and leaders, give them clarity of mission and strength for service. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve, give them your love and comfort. Be with us as we seek to be the hands and feet of Christ. In Jesus name, Amen.

Grace Epperson

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Ministry Team:

Senior Pastor
Reverend Don Gotham
srpastor@uticaumc.org

Contemporary Worship Leader

Mer Renne
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Music Ministry

David Fox
Organist, Hand Bell & Chancel
Choir Director
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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), 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

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