



Utica United
Methodist Church

Weekly Messenger

July 9, 2021

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"So How are You Doing?"

I'm fortunate. I have the opportunity to speak to a lot of people. Even through the COVID lockdown contact with others was a big part of my daily routine. During those meetings and greeting, the question always came to "So how are you doing?" The most common, the standard response to that question was, "Oh I'm OK", or "I'm fine." REALLY?

We're going through unprecedented times. For the past sixteen months we've been locked-down, locked-in, and locked out of life as we knew it, but we're OK. Family and friends have gone to be with the Lord, passing on, often alone, the celebration of their lives, the closure....postponed until sometime in the future, but we're fine. Our children and grandchildren have been kept out of school, graduations minimized at best, proms cancelled. Wedding and anniversary celebrations....on hold. We have our groceries delivered. Many people have been kept from going to work, businesses closed, churches closed. Some people are still held in the grip of the pandemic terror so much so that they stay inside their house....but all is well. Really?

Those of us who attend Celebrate Recovery recognize this "I'm OK" response as denial, and I don't mean the river in Egypt. There is a misconception about who need Celebrate Recovery. The answer is **everyone**. The Bible say's: "*For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.*" (Romans 3:23 NLT). At Celebrate Recovery we learn to recognize, to deal with, the hurts, habits, and hang-ups that accompany the day-to-day life in this sinful world. That baggage we carry keeps us from being the men and women God created us to be, and from fulfilling the purpose God has for us.

Celebrate Recovery is a Christ Centered ministry where people can find God's healing and strength to face and move beyond their hurts, habits, or hang ups. This ministry is for anyone struggling with past or current dysfunctions or compulsions, whether they are affecting their own life or the lives of those around them.

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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

"So how are you doing?" cont.

Celebrate Recovery is not centered on a specific habit or problem, but is rather an umbrella ministry that ministers to people facing a variety of life's difficulties and struggles. At Celebrate Recovery you'll find a community of people working their way along the road to recovery, sharing their lives, experiences, hopes and fears with one another, and finding God's grace and forgiveness in solving their problems.

The Celebrate Recovery Principles are based on the Beatitudes, Jesus' own words and along with the 12 Steps, the program provide a path for spiritual growth and freedom from addictive, compulsive, and dysfunctional behaviors. This freedom creates peace, serenity, joy and a stronger relationship with God and with other people.

Truth be told...every Celebrate Recovery program should have standing room only each and every week. A lot of times we think we're waiting on God to change us. No! God is waiting on *you*. He's waiting on you to say, "Yes, Lord, I'm willing to make these changes." Join us each Thursday at 6:30 PM in Fellowship Hall. Celebrate Recovery—a place where change takes place.

In HIS Service,

Bob & Patsy Clark

Pulled Pork Fundraiser!

On Sunday, July 18th we will be having a pulled pork fundraiser to support our STARS Interns. This is a free will donation fundraiser. Pulled pork sandwiches will be available to take home after both services.

We are on Vacation!

Charlotte and Rachelle are going on vacation starting July 16 - July 25th. There will be some volunteers in the office to answer the phones while we are away. All updates for the prayer list and articles for the messenger that will be available the week of July 23rd need to be in to the office by Wednesday July 14th. Anything received after July 14th will not be published until July 30th.



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

In My Weakness

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 To keep me from being conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Christ was in the garden, alone, praying. He prayed that this cup would be taken from him, that he would not have to face the cross. But then he surrendered, saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done." It is not his prayer that made him strong but his surrender and his trust.

We all know people that have faced great tragedies and they have picked themselves up and become stronger and able to carry on. People who have faced the ravages of Cancer and managed to live their lives to the fullest, encouraging others and comforting those who are losing the battle. People who have lost children to horrible circumstances. I confess that I do not read or even think about Sandyhook without crying. Yet I see these parents go on and continue to speak out against the horror that took their children. Somehow, they have found the strength to go on. Men and women who have seen the horrors of war, who have been exposed to unknown chemicals, who for years after have nightmares that do not cease. Yet every day they pick themselves up and go on. Still saluting and defending the flag of the country they fought for; their heroism humbles me. When we choose to get up and face the day despite our fears but depending on God to help us, we are strong, and it is that faith in God that strengthens us.

In the poem, "Grace knows" by Melissa K. Auten, we read "Grace finds peace in being powerless and surrendered. It is willing to endure uncertainty and a lack of knowledge of the terrain. For there is a sense of trust that whatever lies ahead the Shepherd is capable of guarding his own. Grace knows the path I take is sometimes difficult to tread. There are winding twists and turns, fearful heights to endure, and deep valleys to descend into at times—and yet the Shepherd's voice beckons me, "Come." Grace knows what I cannot see, bears my uncertainties, and bids me to carry on despite my weakened condition. Grace knows my weakness is my strength. That my strength is not my own and that the Shepherd is my supply.

On the days when we feel we have nothing left to give, when our patience is at an end, when the problems seem to be overwhelming, when we must step back and reach for strength, we find God waiting to give us his strength, his patience, his love. He waits and he answers.

Lord, be with us this day, may we feel your presence in our lives. Be with those who are ill, those who grieve. Be with those whose worries and trials seem overwhelming. May they feel your strength and your love supporting them and lifting them up. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry. We thank you for him. We ask your blessings on him and his family. Be with our Staff and Leaders, bless them and keep them in your care. Be with our church, may we be the hands and feet of Jesus the Christ. Help us to fulfill our mission, to serve you and to serve others. Lord, remind us that when we feel alone, you are there, waiting to strengthen us and to carry us. Gives us hope for today and strength for tomorrow.

In Jesus name, Amen

Grace Epperson

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Ministry Team:

Senior Pastor
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Office Hours:

Mon - Thurs 8am-4pm
Friday 8am-2pm

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

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!

