



Weekly Messenger

June 24, 2022

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“Could It Be You?”

Our church has a rich history of offering a Stephen Ministry program. Many people have benefitted from having a trained Stephen Minister listen as they navigate the sometimes troubled waters of life. To offer Stephen Ministry, we need to have trained Stephen Ministers.

Following my words, you'll find the first article to read here in the Messenger in the coming weeks. Please read them, and ask yourself if it could be you God is leading to be the confidential listening ear for someone who has a need?

Grateful for Stephen Ministry,

Rev. Don

Dear friends,

In Matthew 9:37-38 Jesus tells his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” This message was not just for the disciples who were there to hear the Lord during his physical presence on earth. Jesus did not preach to his followers and then ascend into heaven and leave future generations of God’s children stumbling along without compassion and guidance. For 2,000 years, the Savior has called believers to step forward and serve their fellow man.

At Utica UMC there are many opportunities to respond to the Holy Spirit’s call. In the next few weeks, The Stephen Ministry team will be reaching out to the congregation to invite you to join us as Stephen Ministers in offering support, consolation, and comfort not only to members of our congregation, but also our surrounding community. Please pray with us that this campaign will be successful. And, if you are called, as I know some of you will be, please contact Sheila Manning or me to show your interest and learn more about this inspiring commitment. I am new to this vocation, but both my spiritual life and my personal life have already been blessed with increased faith and new purpose.

God bless you as you go. Anna Gilbert, Stephen Ministry Leader.

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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Week 1



Thank you, Ice Cream Man Andrew!



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



Week 1

Classroom Photos



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

CELEBRATE RECOVERY

Many of us feel broken. Our mistakes, the pain others have caused us, and circumstances outside our control taunt us every day. Though we long to turn a new page, begin a new chapter in the story of us, we find ourselves going around the same old mountain again and again.

What if God doesn't want us to rip out our difficult stories, those pages that we for so long wanted to tear out and run through a shredder? What if instead God's will is to repurpose them for good?

Many people claim they don't like the story God is writing in their lives. The mistakes, failures, tragedies, and circumstances outside of our control linger in our minds and hold us back. How do we come to grips with the pieces of our stories that we wish weren't there? How do we silence the pain of what has been done to us and the shame of what we've allowed to be done through us? Where do we begin?

- Stop picking at emotional scabs, those scars and start allowing God to heal your wounds;
- Forgive others so their mistakes can't imprison you any longer,
- Break free from the shame of the past to live free in the redemption of the present; and
- See how God can use your story to give others the courage to hope again.
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What has been done to you and what has been done through you does not disqualify you from God's best for your life, it qualifies you for an even greater purpose than you would have ever known without it. The fact is that the worst parts of your story might just be what God uses the most. [We have a whole ministry, Celebrate Recovery that uses that very principle.] So, sink deep into God's life-changing truths.

Allow God to untangle our most painful emotions with the fingers of grace, putting His redemption on display. It's often in the hardest parts of our narratives, our stories, we get to see God's greatest work--and it changes the ending of our stories. As we overcome shame, offer forgiveness, and use our stories to help others, we find freedom from the past and learn to live in the restoration of the present.

That's the secret to living a better story: understanding that the worst parts of our past are the very things God uses most. The "enemy" will tell you to keep that a secret, BUT GOD....God says, "Tell all who will listen this secret of living a better story. Tell all who will listen, how God has used you."

Tell your story. You are more than the part of your story that you hate the most. Step out into God's grace.



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

I MISS CHURCH

It has been 3 Sundays now that I have not attended church. I miss it. I miss how much it adds to my life. I miss the words from the sermons (do not tell but some of my ideas for devotionals are from sermons. Often Pastor Don's words will connect me with something that happened in my life or something that I should be doing and am not). I miss the music; I miss the friendship. From being greeted at the door to talking with the Ushers to being seated in the pew, to reading the Bulletin and the Prayer List and then counting how many are in the choir (I do not know why I do this, but I do) especially greeting those wonderful people that I care so much for and that care for me. Then after the service there is time to catch up with some, finding out how they are and talking with them. Once a month I have the privilege of praying with those in need of prayer for themselves or loved ones. This simple act gives me comfort and it is a precious gift that I can do this. I continue to pray for their needs later as I think of them. As I have listed the things I miss when I cannot attend church, I realize why I miss church. It is the connection with other Christians, those that are certain in their faith and those that are humbled by the knowledge that Christ came for them and loves them, and they thank God for the gift. We are all in various stages of our faith but what brings us together is stronger than that that separates us. Coming together in the building we call church helps us realize that we are one, we are committed to a trinity, we are committed to making the church become what Christ called it to be, a place for all who want to know and to grow. My body is healing, and I am doing well, and I will soon be back among my church people. Thanks be to God. I remember that through all things Christ is with us. That through our grief, through our "falls" through our sins and our forgiveness, through whatever life brings into our lives even separation from loved ones and loss, through it all, nothing can separate us from the love and comfort of God. There is a place that was planned by God for us to come to where we are humbled by love. It's called church.

Colossians 3:12-17 Therefore as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds that all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Dear Lord, we thank you for the blessings of this day, for the comfort of your presence in our lives. Be with the sick and those who are grieving. May they feel your arms around them and be comforted. May we do as Jesus commanded Peter and, "Feed your sheep," not only those that hunger for food but those that hunger for you. Be with our Pastor and bless his ministry, grant him safety and be with his family. Be with our staff and leaders, give them guidance and comfort. Be with those in our community who have needs, may we answer their need and give them the peace that comes from you. Be with our country Lord as we seek to be a united country. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES:

9:30AM

with Organ, Choir and Handbells
in the Sanctuary

10:30AM

with our Worship Band
in Fellowship Hall

Online Worship

A recorded service will be
available online on
Facebook, our church website and
on YouTube beginning at
9:00am each Sunday.

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Thursday

8:00am-4:00pm

Friday 8:00am- 2:00pm

Food Pantry

Our food pantry is
available to those in need
by calling the church office
and making an
appointment.

This institution is an equal
opportunity provider.

Keep Connected

If you are not signed up for our
Weekly Messenger email, you
can do so on our website by
clicking on the "More" tab, then
"Weekly Messenger"; on that
page you will find a place to
register for our weekly email!



*"Like" us
on
Facebook!*

Our Mission

Inviting people to rely
on Jesus to find
unexpected purpose,
peace and joy.

Ministry Team

Rev. Don Gotham

srpastor@uticaumc.org

Music Ministry

David Fox, Organist, Bell, & Chancel Choirs
Director

FoxDavidL@sbcglobal.net

Mer Renne, Contemporary
Worship Leader

mer@uticaumc.org

Communications Director

Rachelle Heldt

rachelle@uticaumc.org

Secretary/Bookkeeper

Charlotte Ramsey

charlotte@uticaumc.org

Deadline Information

Articles for advertising/
announcements must be submitted to
the office by 4:00pm on
Wednesday of each week.

Messenger: Email to Rachelle Heldt
Prayer List: Email to Charlotte Ramsey
or call the church office.



Going on vacation; can't make it to church?

How about using E-giving so you can still give your offering for
those times when you can't be here **The E-giving tab is on our
church website: www.uticaumc.org**
If you need assistance, call the church office.

Celebrate Recovery



**Celebration
Place**

The Celebrate Recovery Children's Ministry
Thursday evening beginning at 6:30pm
in Room 305



Meetings take place at 6:30pm every Thursday in
the Wesley Board Room
(near the Main Office area).