



Weekly Messenger

July 1, 2022

IN THIS ISSUE:

STARS Photos

Stephen Ministry

UMW Collection

Pulled Pork Fundraiser

Celebrate Recovery

Devotional

Back Page Info

"July Prayer Focus"

Collaboration is what we need. When the work we do as a church pulls us in multiple directions, we have confusion. When we communicate well, things get better. When we coordinate our efforts, we begin to move more rapidly toward our goal. But, when we collaborate, we are a powerful force for the cause of Christ. Each month we are presenting a prayer focus. We are asking for our church to pray about the same needs. We aren't asking people to lose their own thoughts or reasoning, but that we collaborate to become the strong force God intends us to be as a church. My thanks to Martha Powers for crafting this month's prayer. I invite all of us to pray that God gives us wisdom, openness, and willing hearts.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Don

John 15:12
The Good News Bible

Jesus loves us in an extraordinary, incredible way. It's up to you to take the love you receive from him and find ways to bring that love and goodwill into your community.

Gracious and Heavenly Father as we prepare our hearts for the many new ministry opportunities here at Utica United Methodist Church we offer ourselves to you, on this day and ask that you pour out your blessings upon us as we seek to be your church within our community.

Instill within each of us open hearts and open minds so that we may discern your call upon our lives as disciples of this, your church.

Lord in the quietness of this moment help us to hear your voice and know the vision you have for your church.

Guide us with wisdom and knowledge as we seek to live out your plan for each of us and for our community.

We ask that you prepare us for the mighty call upon our lives as we would humbly and earnestly answer the call as true "fishers of men".

Lord, may the power of the Holy Spirit be at work within our lives so that we may successfully cultivate relationships with our community.

As we begin each new day, each new ministry opportunity may our work and commitment to our community shine brightly in all we do.

And finally, Lord, we pray that you will guide and inspire Utica United Methodist Church and all the members as we continue on our mission of faith, honoring you with a true servant's heart.

In your holy and precious name, we pray,
Amen.

Thoughts to Ponder on page 2...

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Thoughts to ponder this month:

How can I serve you, Lord?

Help me Lord to discover my talents.

When you call upon me Lord, let me be ready to say YES LORD, YES LORD, YES LORD YES!!!!

Stephen Ministry

Many years ago Stephen Ministry was begun in our church. The Lord placed upon my heart the desire to become a Stephen Minister. I learned to actively listen to people and help them navigate the muddy waters of their lives. Many people's lives become difficult and they don't know where to turn for help. Stephen Ministers become a friend that helps listen confidentially and allows them to figure out how to deal with their situation. This was definitely a valuable life experience for me as well as a good way to help others come to appropriate ways to deal with their problems. Seriously consider becoming a Stephen Minister. It is rewarding for all.

Blessings, Kathy Weaver

United Methodist Women - Collection

The United Methodist Women are collecting paper towels, toilet paper, and Kleenex now through September 4th to benefit Turning Point. There is a collection bin in the hallway across from the office labeled UMW. Please consider picking up an extra paper towel, box of Kleenex or rolls of toilet paper and drop them off to the church.



STARS and XCEL



We are happy to announce that the STARS and XCEL program received a scholarship to have Alexandria's Nature Bus visit on July 20th. Alexandria's Nature Bus comes to us from Howell Nature Center. The Spirit of Alexandria Foundation's mission is "Connecting Children to Nature" through grants, scholarships to ecology programs and Alexandria's Nature Bus. More information about this program and Foundation can be found at www.spiritofalexandria.org. This program continues through donations and awareness.



Pulled Pork Fundraiser

On Sunday, July 24th we will be having our pulled pork fundraiser to support the STARS Intern program. The money we raise each year helps to continue the program next year. This is a free will donation fundraiser. Pulled pork sandwiches and sides will be available to take home after both services.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



Week 2
The Reptarium



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



Week 3

Park Fun



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.
-

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 Love Baseball



I went to my first baseball game 80 years ago. I still remember it but if I'm truthful it's mostly the vendors I remember. It was my 7th birthday, and the Safety boys were going and my brother was one of them. My Mother went as a chaperone, and I was able to tag along. The Tigers played New York Yankees and the Tigers won 1-0. (I had to look that up.) The game was at Briggs Stadium. I didn't go to another game although I watched them on TV In the 68 season and began a love for baseball that still continues. When I began to work for the Red Cross, 2 of the other Nurses and one of the clerk's loved baseball. We began to request opening day off and would go to the ballpark. Management wanted to know why 4 people were requesting the same day off in the Spring every year. Because we were taking personal days we didn't have to tell them, personal days are personal. But, we relented and told them. They had never guessed that was what we were doing. We would also take a few days during the season and go to a game. One year my two children, no longer children but teens mentioned that how come I never took them to opening day. I purchased two tickets directly across the stadium from where my friends and I would be sitting, and they went to Tiger Stadium for opening day. I didn't want them to see their mother acting up during a game. I was prone to yelling at umpires. Meanwhile I took binoculars so I could watch them. They loved the game. I had taken my son to his first game when he was very young to Tiger Stadium. I called the Principal and told him that I would be taking him out of school to go to a baseball game with his mother. The neighbor and I had decided to take our sons to a game. We had a great time and when I asked him years later if he remembered it, he described the day with such happiness that it was like reliving that day through his eyes. I hope he always remembers that day. We would go to a lot of games together at Comerica Park. God blessed me with a love for a sport that I never played. He blessed me with the friends made and the three friends who also loved baseball and were such fun to be with. When I look back on my years, I realize how blessed I was with friends that joined with me in their love of baseball. I was reminded of this when one of them passed away this month. In fact, I was planning on attending the service with the one remaining friend and baseball buddy the Sunday after my most recent fall and couldn't go. It's been several years since we went. But I still have the memories of wondering if the snow would stick as we sat bundled in our coats on opening day. We managed to get tickets to a 1984 World series game in the bleachers and watched as Alan Trammel hit two home runs. Two of my baseball friends are gone but the memories live on as I recall the fun and joy, we had at Tiger Stadium and Comerica Park. I am so grateful to God that he has given me memories to treasure and put friends in my path that love baseball. Pastor Don and I will go to at least one game this year, God has given me another "baseball buddy." I thank God that he has given me friends to share baseball with and for the memories of all the moments and days that were filled with joy.

Lord, we thank you for memories and for the friends you send us. You bless our lives with others and then you give us the memories of those happy and blessed times. Thank you for this day, for the blessings of family, friends, and the love you send into our lives. We ask Lord that you be with those that are ill, and those that are in need. May we treat others as we would like to be treated. Be with Pastor Don and bless his ministry and grant him safety and watch over his family. Be with our Staff and Leaders, give them guidance and bless them in their efforts. Be with our church may we remember who we are and who we belong to. Lord our country is in turmoil, help us to remember that you have called us to love one another. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



The church office will be closed on Monday, July 4th in observance of our national holiday. Enjoy this time with your friends and family. We will be open for normal business hours on Tuesday.

STARS and Xcel will also be off on Monday, July 4th and resuming the program on Tuesday, July 5th.

Make sure to take a look at the upstairs classroom hallway and the entry way by Fellowship Hall when you visit the church. Jennifer, our STARS/Xcel director, has been hanging photos as well as lessons and crafts that the campers have been doing at their time here at camp.



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