



Weekly Messenger

July 8, 2022

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“It Happens...”

Recently a parishioner sorrowfully told me they were unhappy with their faith. "There are no surprises." they lamented. As if to apologize for their dissatisfaction, they went on to say, "I suppose it is unfair of me to ask God to keep things exciting." I listened for a while, and when I sensed the moment was right, I asked if they were interested in my take. They indicated they were, so I shared.

"Isn't it surprising enough that God sees fit to continue to forgive? After all, most of us are guilty of committing the same sins, asking for forgiveness, and then committing the same sins all over again." I shared. "Further, the fact that God knew when dying for us on the cross that we were given to this pattern while dying for us on the cross, and still he hung there and died to redeem us, isn't that surprise enough?" I asked.

It happens we get numb to things that repeat in our lives. When we develop a pattern, it can be hard to see it as fresh. Still, we must keep a fresh perspective when it comes to the surprise of forgiveness. We don't deserve it and can't earn it, yet God is faithful to give it when we ask.

Just so you know, I asked the parishioner's permission before sharing this story, and I haven't, and I won't reveal their identity. I shared this because it happens in many of our lives.

Still surprised by forgiveness,

Rev. Don



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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Football and Stephen Ministries

Before I retired from coaching, my team was in the Super Bowl six times,” says Bill Arnsparger, who coached for 23 seasons in the NFL. “I thought nothing would ever match that. But being a Stephen Minister has been one of the greatest experiences of my life.”

During his coaching career, Arnsparger heard about Stephen Ministry at his church several times. “I knew it was important, so I couldn’t wait to get involved,” he recalls. So, once he retired, he trained to become a Stephen Minister.

“I find serving as a Stephen Minister very rewarding,” Arnsparger says. “The hours I’ve invested into Stephen Ministry have brought me closer to the Lord and to others in my congregation. It’s an opportunity to work with people and really help them. Each care receiver inspires me to build my faith. I always benefit from our time together.”

Although Stephen Ministry and football might not seem to have much in common, Arnsparger sees similarities between the two. “Stephen Ministry builds confidence, both in the Stephen Ministers and in the care receivers,” he says. “Stephen Ministry takes teamwork, too. In supervision, we need to work together to provide the best care possible—to our care receivers and to one another. Each opportunity to care is a new challenge, a new experience, just as each game is.”

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. This collection goes until September 4th so keep bringing in these items!



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

Thank You Gary Taylor!



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Celebrate Recovery

Last November, as part of the “umbrella ministry” of Celebrate Recovery here at Utica United Methodist Church, a one evening seminar called Surviving the Holidays was offered. This class was designed to help people who lost a loved one get through the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s period.

That seminar was followed up in January with a 13 week GriefShare Seminar and support group. We also offered this seminar at Town Village Senior Village.

We are pleased to announce a new, one evening seminar, on August 18, 2022 called:

LOSS OF A SPOUSE™

Here’s a bit of information about the class.

Widowed? Help is here and hope is possible

Do you dread the lonely days and nights? Feel like your brain is in a fog? Unsure of how you’ll go on? Wonder what to do with your spouse’s belongings?

At a Loss of a Spouse seminar you’ll discover:

- Other people understand and have found ways to make it through.
- Why it won’t always hurt so much.
- Reasons for hope.
- Practical tips for coping with the death of a spouse.

A Loss of a Spouse seminar lasts about two hours. Here’s what to expect:

- **Video seminar:** You’ll view a 35-minute video with encouraging, practical advice from counselors, pastors, and widowed men and women.
- **Sharing time:** Then you’ll get to talk with other widowed people about what you learned from the video. (There’s no pressure to share!)
- **A guide to bring home:** Everyone receives a booklet with more than 30 short readings on how to live with grief and eventually rebuild your life.

If this is something that you or someone you know may benefit from, please let us know. You can call the church, contact Bob or Patsy Clark, or Ray Lake.

The ministry email address is: celebrate.recovery@uticaumc.org

Beginning September 8, 2022 we will once again offer the full 13 week GriefShare support group.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Dust on The Bible

When I was a teenager and was attending church and my parents began attending the Pastor at that time gave a sermon on “Is There Dust on Your Bible?” He said that he had gone into some homes and discovered that people had dust on their bibles. He knew when he saw this that they were not studying the word of God. Whenever the current Pastor was coming over my Mother would make sure that she dusted off the bible that sat on the coffee table. I tried to tell her that the sermon was about reading the bible, not dusting it so that others would think you were reading it. My Mother had had to quit school at the age of 10 to help out at home. She was the eldest girl in a family of 11 children. She had difficulty reading. I would sometimes have to read the instructions for crocheting to her but once she did the stitches, she was okay. The bible we had was large and was always out. A door-to-door salesman had sold a set of encyclopedias to my Mother, and we had received the bible and a bookstand as a gift with the purchase. When the books were repossessed for nonpayment, we were able to keep the bible and bookstand. When I did not have a book to read, I would often sit and just open up the encyclopedias and read. This drove my Mother crazy and added to her favorite description of me, “She’s always got her nose in a book.” I do not know if my Mother ever was in the habit of reading the bible, but I know she lived some of it. She never turned away anyone in need. We often had people staying in our already crowded house. I remember one family of 4 that were suddenly homeless, and my Mother took them in. Then there was the Canadian soldier during World War II who came looking for relatives with the same name. We were not related but he stayed and would come back on his furloughs during the war. Then there was the troubled young man who escaped from the Police Station where he had been arrested for a minor offense and came to her for shelter. She cleaned him up, let him call someone for a ride, and lied to the Chief of Police the next day when he asked her if she had seen him. That young man cleaned up his life and went on to help troubled youth from dysfunctional families. She started a Rummage Sale at church on Saturdays to feed the hungry. She helped start a clothing closet for those who needed clothing, she gathered baked goods from others and herself and sold them at the Farmer’s Market and it went to the WSCS (Women’s Society of Christian Service) now the UMW. to help those who needed help. She worked in the kitchen and cleaned the communion cups. I recall her standing in the driveway holding a weeping woman that had just had a stillborn. They sympathized with each other as my brother had recently died. She visited my cousin who was born without the ability to walk or talk and was placed in a State home at the age of 7 or 8 until her death at the age of 30. She was often the only visitor she had received, alone and forgotten but my Mother continued to visit her. She may not have read the bible, but she lived it in so many ways.

Matthew 25:35-40 “For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison, and you came to visit me. Then the righteous shall answer him, ‘Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Lord, forgive us for all the times we have failed you. Help us Lord to answer your call, to help each other, to aid those less fortunate than ourselves, to help those that have gone from your path, to feed the hungry both those that need food and those that hunger for your word. May we not be blind to the needs of those around us. To walk humbly, to forgive others, to accept all your children, to share what we have and to give to others love, acceptance, trust, and your word. Forgive us for our shortcomings, for our sin of being blinded by our own needs and unable to see the needs of our neighbors. We ask Lord that you be with those who grieve in our midst, those who have lost parents, children and loved ones. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and his family. Forgive us our shortcomings. Be with those who are ill, may we minister to them. Help us to be better at following your word, to love our neighbor and to forgive others. Help us as a church to reach out to those who seek you. May they find you in our midst. 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.

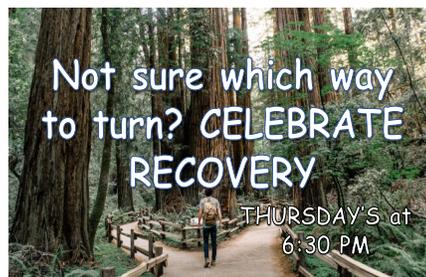
Messenger: Email to Rachelle Heldt
Prayer List: Email to Charlotte Ramsey
or call the church office.



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