

# Weekly Messenger

December 16, 2022

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## The Wonder of Peace

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” John 14:27 Jesus spoke these words as he was preparing the disciples for his death and the arrival of the Holy Spirit. So, focusing on these in Advent is like starting with the end. I believe these words Jesus spoke offer us a marvelous gift of hope, all of which stems from the wonder of peace.

With almost every email I send, I close it with “Peace.” It is my hope that bidding someone peace will remind them that among the reasons God sent Jesus to earth was to bring us peace. Let me remind you of the expression of peace spoken by the host of angels at the arrival of Jesus. “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” Luke 2:14

Jesus came and experienced our need for peace. He knew life throws us off track, and wanted us to have true peace regardless of our circumstances. I believe the lyrics of this favorite hymn testify to the value of God’s peace.

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea-billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin—Oh, the bliss of this glorious thought,  
My sin—not in part, but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,  
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend,  
“Even so”—it is well with my soul.

Yes, truly, God knew our need for peace! As we focus on peace this last Sunday of Advent, I pray peace abounds in your heart, whatever your lot. I pray you can say it is well with your soul!

Peace,

Rev. Don

# **THE WEEKLY MESSENGER**

## **Warming Center**

We are starting sign-ups this Sunday for the Warming Center for: Intake, Kitchen Help, Food Donations.

After 2 years we are once again welcoming warming center guests back into our Church. We will be housing guests January 1 - January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Bob and Deb MacKool have stepped down from leading the kitchen portion of The Warming Center Ministry after many years. Their banter and smiles will be missed.

We have been blessed with leaders in Linda Baker and Deb Pelton who have stepped up to Help keep this ministry going.

Curious, Stop by and see us after service or give Ron a call at 586-243-5538

## **Church Directories and Calendars**

The new 2022 church directories have arrived and are available to be picked up from the church. Grab one on Sunday or stop by the office during business hours to pick one up. We also just received our 2023 calendars and have them available for pick up as well.

## **Looking Ahead in December**

### **Christmas Eve -**

- 11am Family service in Fellowship Hall
- 8pm service in the Sanctuary "The Wonder of His Birth"

What, Where & When: Christmas Eve Potluck at 4:00pm in Fellowship Hall

Who: Everyone is invited!

Please sign up so we know how many to set up for and what you will bring to share.

Contact Windy Hedblad at 586-443-0411 with questions or contact the church office.

There will be activities after the meal, so you may show up anytime from 4:00pm until the start of service at 8:00pm to join the festivities and fellowship!

### **Christmas Day -**

- Sunday, December 25th we will have one service at 9:30am in the Sanctuary

Sunday, December 25th is the last Sunday to turn in your offering for the year. The office will be open to receive end of year donations December 27th, 28th and 29th. E-giving donations will be accepted for 2022 up until midnight of December 31st. Please remember that during the holiday USPS will be busy and you will want to make sure your checks for end of year giving will arrive in plenty of time to the church to be counted in 2022.

The Christmas Offering is available thru e-giving. Just select Christmas Offering in the drop down menu when you go to donate.

The office will be closed on Friday, December 23rd, Monday, December 26th and Friday, December 30th.

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



## PLEASE HELP ENSURE WE MEET OUR YEAR-END FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

We are making steady progress toward meeting our year end obligations. As of December 11, we have received \$64,588 (in November and December) toward our remaining expenses for the year. This includes the proceeds from our Cookie Walk and Angel Tree. This amount is represented by the 6+ gold stars in the banner.

Finance Committee appreciates all of your continued gifts, as well as your extra gifts, to ensure our 2022 commitments are met. At the beginning of December our remaining expenses were estimated to be \$40,000 - \$45,000. These included: Compensation (\$15,500); Utilities & Upkeep (\$17,000); Ministries & Administration (\$8,000); and Conference Pensions & Ministry Shares (\$1,025).

At this point, we have about \$25,500 remaining in expenses for the year. This is represented by the 2+ white stars in the banner. There are only 12 days, including 2 Sundays, remaining to receive your 2022 gifts. Please see the information elsewhere in the Messenger about the deadlines for receiving your gifts depending on how you make them (e.g., e-Giving, mailing, or in person).

Please continue to do what you can to ensure all the stars are shining brightly (gold) by the end of the year! Thank you.

## Coat Delivery

Thank you to everyone who purchased a coat for kids! There is still time to turn in your coats or help fund an already purchased coat by giving \$30. The coats were delivered to Sue Giallombardo - Community Relations Services Specialist and Mark Vanderpool - City Manager of Sterling Heights. From there, these coats will find their way into the hands of children in some of the Utica Community Schools whose families cannot afford to purchase them a new coat this year.



# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Cookie Walk Update



Thank you bakers and thank you buyers! Our Cookie Walk on December 10 and 11 was a wonderful success. More than 22 bakers made over 120 dozen cookies! And, many buyers from our community and congregation contributed over \$1,500 after filling their cookie containers. We hope you found some old favorites and some new treats to try. As you enjoy eating your selections (or sharing them with others) we hope you are filled with the joy and peace that comes from celebrating the birth of Jesus and experiencing God's love and grace. Merry Christmas!



# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## HOPE OF THE WORLD

The Jews had been waiting for a warrior king to rescue them. God sent them a babe. A babe that was the son of a young girl and a carpenter. A son of God the Father. A babe that would grow into a man who could perform miracles. He taught in the temple as a child. Then grew to turn water into the finest wine, to feed 5000 from a fish and five loaves of bread and had leftovers, he changed lives from sinners into forgiven people, to raise dead people, to heal lepers and cure illnesses and drive out demons. He taught not violence and release from oppression but love and caring for each other and faithfulness to God by how we treat those around us and that that is how we honor God. And it all began with a baby. Every year we celebrate the birth of that child. Once again, we sing the familiar hymns, Silent Night, O Little Town of Bethlehem, I heard the Bells on Christmas Day, and more. We give gifts to friends and family. We light Advent candles. We celebrate and sometimes we realize it's not about us but a love that lasts from before our birth and beyond to eternity. We give from our abundance to the poor. And sometimes we forget the Christ in Christmas. What is that saying? The reason for the season!

Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine. Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign.

Luke 2:4-7 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David. Because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

Dear Lord, we thank you for the gift of a savior, for the Christmas season. May we remember those who are poor, and may we give them from our bounty, may we remember those who are ill, and may we aid them, may we remember those who are suffering and may we comfort them. Be with us Lord in all we do. Be with our church Lord, may it be your church. Be with our Pastor and bless his ministry, give him strength for the tasks before him and may he feel the love and support from those he serves. Be with our staff and leaders, bless what they do for your church. Be with those who suffer from war in the Ukraine and those suffering in Haiti. We pray in the name of Jesus the Christ who came as a child. In Jesus name, 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 3:00pm 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, Thursday, 6:30pm

