

# Weekly Messenger

December 2, 2022

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## December Prayer Focus

Heavenly and Most Gracious Father,

Advent is upon us once again, and we find ourselves desperately searching for the perfect gift, the perfect family celebration, the perfect picture that captures the hope, love, joy, and peace of this beautiful season of Christmas.

In doing so, Lord, we forget that in YOU, all these gifts are given freely to each of us, not just during the season of Advent but in every moment of every day. We get lost in the busyness of the season, failing to recognize in you that we find perfection.

You offer us HOPE even when we don't see it. Your son came into this world as a sign of true agape LOVE. A love so great he became vulnerable and died on the cross so that we may have eternal life. The gift of JOY is given to each of us so that we may proclaim you as our Lord and Savior, walking closely with you every day. And Lord you, and you alone offer PEACE, a peace that passes all understanding. A peace that is offered to us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us once again humble ourselves before you, O Lord, as we receive the gift of salvation and eternal life through the birth of your son, Jesus Christ.

You call us to be a light, a beacon that illuminates and shines brightly in a darkened world. Let us be that light as we celebrate "The Wonder of Christmas." Let us still ourselves so that we may truly receive and share the gifts you offer this day. The gifts of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace that are found in the birth of the Christ Child. In your most holy and precious name Lord, we pray. AMEN.

Thank you, Martha Powers for this prayer.



# 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

## United Women in Faith

Our December meeting will take place on Wednesday, December 14 in Fellowship Hall. We will begin with a potluck meal at noon. Each person should bring a dish to share and your place setting. Beverages will be provided.

Carol Stoner will be sharing a Christmas story for our program that will begin at 1:00. All women of the church are welcome to attend.

## Looking Ahead in December

### Christmas Eve -

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

### 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

## Cookie Walk Update

This year we will be opening our Christmas Cookie Walk to the community and congregation on Saturday, December 10 (10 AM – Noon) and to the congregation on Sunday, December 11 (after services).

**BAKERS** – Please bring your cookies to church by Friday, December 9. You can drop them off Monday – Thursday (12/5 – 12/8) during regular office hours (8 AM – 4 PM) or on Friday (12/9) from 10 PM – 2 PM. Because the sale is open to the community on Saturday, it is important we receive the cookies ahead of time.

**SPREAD THE WORD** – Please tell your friends and family to come Saturday, December 10 from 10 AM – Noon. If you are a Face Book user, please “Like” our Cookie Walk event or better yet “Invite” your friends and family. Printed flyers are also available at church for you to take and share with others.

**COOKIE EATERS** – Don’t miss out on this opportunity. If you are a cookie connoisseur or you simply enjoy eating cookies, mark these dates on your calendar so you can fill a container with a variety of great cookies. Free will donations will be appreciated. All donations will be used for the many ministries and projects we support.



## Angel Tree

This year we have the opportunity to purchase and Angel ornament for our Angel Tree. These can be purchased in honor or in memory of a loved one. The cost is \$15.00 per ornament. The money raised will be used towards the ministries of the church. There is an order form available in the bulletins this week and we are asking for payment to be included with your order form. There is a limited quantity available so make sure to get yours soon.



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

As of November 27, we have received \$44,633 in contributions toward our remaining expenses for the year – represented by the 4+ gold stars in the banner. We have 4 Sundays left in 2022 to fulfill our remaining expenses (approximately \$45,000) – represented by the 4½ white stars in the banner. Finance Committee appreciates all of your gifts, as well as your continuing extra gifts, to ensure all of our 2022 commitments are met.

As of November 1, we had approximately \$90,000 remaining in expenses for the year. So, we are about half way toward meeting our year-end obligations. The \$90,000 included: Compensation (\$38,000); Utilities & Upkeep (\$28,140); Ministries & Administration (\$12,355); and Conference Pensions & Ministry Shares (\$10,645). An update on our remaining expenses will be provided in the next Messenger.

Our average monthly income this year has been about \$28,000. This means we need about \$18,000 in extra giving between now and the end of the year. The carry-forward funds we have been using are nearly depleted. Please continue to do what you can to ensure all the stars are shining brightly (gold) by the end of the year!

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Godly Habits

*“Practice these things. Devote your life to them  
so that everyone can see your progress.”*

1 Timothy 4:15 (GW)

Habits, we all have them. Each of us have a collection of good habits and bad habits. At Celebrate Recovery we focus on reducing the number of bad habits and increasing the number of good habits. How do we go about reducing those bad habits we carry and increasing the good ones? We expose them to the truth. The Bible tells us in John 8:32, **“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

God’s truth will set you free, but I have to warn you, it may make you miserable at first. For instance, when you think about facing your weaknesses with honesty, fear can keep you in a prison of denial.

But when you allow God to shine the light of his truth on your faults and failures, you’ll be set free from the old habits and patterns that have held you in bondage. You’ll finally be free to replace your old way of doing things with God’s way of doing things.

How can you find this kind of freedom? It begins with understanding how much God loves you. He is already aware of all your weaknesses and mistakes, and he is actively working to help you change. It won’t happen overnight. The truth is, even though you were given a brand-new nature at the moment you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you still have old habits and patterns that need to be replaced. Doing that takes time.

You may wonder if it’s really possible to be free from your habits, hurts, and hang-ups. That doubt might lead you to say things like, “It’s just the way I am, and it’s the way I’ll always be.” That’s fear talking, loud and clear. Fear of change will slow your growth and keep you from experiencing the freedom Jesus died to give you.

Freedom requires you to practice the godly habits every day that point you to truth and make you more like Christ—habits like a daily quiet time with God and accountability to small group fellowship. The more you practice these new habits, the more the old habits will fade away.

Celebrate Recovery is a great place to help you discover and practice new habits, good habits, and to drop those long held, and often denied bad habits. Join us each Thursday at 6:30 PM. Let the journey to wholeness begin.

Bob & Patsy – Celebrate Recovery Ministry Leaders

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## AM I SERVING OR BEING SERVED

When I was in the hospital a couple weeks ago, I was told not to bend my right wrist. I asked them for a splint but in that whole hospital there was not a splint available, and it had to be ordered. Because the doctor had taken me off the medication, I have taken for years for an essential tremor in my left hand it was shaking. They brought my supper tray. It was Salmon and vegetables and various accompaniments. I had difficulty picking up food with my right hand without bending my wrist and when I tried with my left hand, I threw food all over the tray. I have a lot of pride and I did not want to call for help eating. I mean how mortifying is that? So, I did the best I could. The next morning, I had ordered oatmeal and a muffin and hot tea. That was a bit easier for me to handle as I was doing a bit better using my left hand. As I was getting ready to eat one of the kitchen staff came in and gruffly said to me, "Are you going to eat all of that?" I was a bit shocked that she would speak in such a manner to a patient and simply replied, "Well, I hope so." She left. I thought where did that come from? Then it dawned on me she had picked up my tray from the evening before and was probably angry at the food I left. I know there are children starving in Africa, but I felt I had done the best I could. She was supposed to be serving me and I guess I failed in my part of the bargain which evidently was to eat everything on my tray. I was not to see her again and I was glad. I found her rude and demeaning. I find that as I have gotten older, people who are there to serve you whether cashiers, waitstaff, or clerks can sometimes be very rude no matter how nice you are. I recently lost my cane. I have a habit of walking off feeling fine and suddenly realizing I have no cane. I had only been to two places, a restaurant where I was parked 12 feet from the door and Kroger Supermarket. I called the restaurant they said they did not have any canes. I had given up and bought another cane in fact two. I was in Kroger just to pick up a prescription (just what I need, another pill) and decided to check the customer service desk anyway. The clerk looked at me and said, sighing, "I have 5 of them." I wanted to explain that when you park in the handicapped area and there are no carts available you use your cane to enter the store where you put your cane in the cart and use the cart as a walker. Then you accidentally leave the cane in the cart when you leave. I thought that this was what I had possibly done and indeed I had done exactly that. I wanted to explain old people to him but there was a line behind me, so I just felt someday if he is lucky, he'll understand. While I don't do the things I once did I feel God is still calling me to serve. I do what I can. Am I being served? In so many ways. I am served in the message on Sunday, the phone calls and text messages during the week, the meetings that make me feel like I am contributing. Granted, I don't do the things that I want to do, but I am pleased and thrilled at those who take my place. The one who stepped up for quilting has touched my heart, the ones doing a Bible study I sat up and then asked others to lead blessed me with their willingness to give of their time and selves, years ago I gave up communion when my tremor tried to throw the basket of bread all over the sanctuary, a wonderful giving person took it over. I am becoming acquainted with doing and giving things up. It is the way life works. God has blessed me with the serving and being served.

1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it. And God has appointed first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

1 Corinthians 13:1 And now I show you the most excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

Lord, we thank you for this day and for the warmth of homes filled with love, for the food on our tables and the bounty we enjoy. Let us remember those this Advent season who are struggling and let us give of our gifts and ourselves to help them. Be with those who serve the hungry, the homeless, those who are struggling bless them and guide them. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve for those gone before us. Be with our Pastor and bless his ministry. Be with his family. Be with our staff and leaders guide them as they serve our church. Be with those who are suffering in Ukraine, grant them courage and safety, guide and protect them. Be with those in Haiti who are suffering. Be with our church may we remember that we are all children of God. Guide us as we seek to serve each other and our community. 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 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

