



Weekly Messenger

January 13, 2023

IN THIS ISSUE:

Celebrate
Recovery

Finance
Update

Chili, Soup,
Dessert
Cook-off

Devotional

Back Page
Info

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Why Go?

I've been asked multiple times over the years why I go on mission trips. Some have asked out of curiosity, and some have asked out of what seems to be frustration that I will be gone again. Some assess what they can do of the situation in the country I'll be traveling to and decide I must be mad to even think of going to "that" place.

With the number of mission trips I've been on (this will be my 19th), it might surprise you to know I once had a resistance to foreign missions. The motto of my seminary continues to be "The Whole Bible for the Whole World." The seminary leadership took that motto seriously, and every year there was a week-long event called the Kingdom Conference. During the Kingdom Conference, speakers were brought in from across the world, and the importance of sharing the Good News of Jesus all across the world was emphasized. I resented those weeks. I thought there were more important things we could be focused on.

In my last year of seminary, a friend asked if I would be interested in going with him on a mission trip. The trip was to Argentina, I spoke a bit of Spanish, and after a time of prayer, I felt God calling me to say yes. It was a friend who asked if I would go to Haiti for the first time. I prayed and felt God calling me to go. It happened almost the same way this time. A friend asked if I would lead the team, I prayed about it and felt God calling me to go, so here we go.

I go because God has led me to say yes. God leads all of us if we open ourselves to hearing what God has to say. I pray you make space in your life to seek the leading of the Spirit and the courage to go where God asks you to go!

I covet your prayers for the team. I have posted the prayer calendar for the team on the church's Facebook page.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Don

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



How time flies. It was back on January 3, 2019 the first Celebrate Recovery meeting was held at Utica United Methodist Church. Since that Thursday evening these weekly meeting has affected many people, helping them to move past long held hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Even through the “COVID” shutdown, the Celebrate Recovery Ministry was able to meet on-line weekly. Celebrate Recovery is truly an amazing ministry.

Each Thursday evening we have had member’s step-up, allowing the opportunity to offer Celebration Place, a ministry for elementary age children, and we have been able to provide childcare for under-aged children enabling parents to attend, knowing that their little ones are well cared for. Also in conjunction with the Celebrate Recovery meetings, we were able to offer GriefShare, and attempted to offer a Single & Parenting support group. Patsy and I wish to thank each of you who came forward to facilitate these important aspects of the ministry.

As we move into the New Year, we pray for continued growth of these healing ministries. We stand ready to offer additional healing ministries opportunities under the Celebrate Recovery ministry umbrella.

These ministries include “the Landing —Celebrate Recovery for teens, Divorce Care, DCFK—Divorce Care For Kids, and Chronic Joy—a ministry for those of us dealing with Chronic Illness, Mental Illness, Chronic Pain & Disabilities, and a relaunch of Single & Parenting. If you feel that God is calling you to become a part of any of these ministry opportunities talk to Patsy or I. We would love to have you as a part of the Celebrate Recovery Umbrella Ministry

Bob & Patsy

FINANCIAL UPDATE – 2022 and 2023

Three cheers for all of you! Thanks to your generosity we were able to meet all of our obligations for 2022 and carry forward a small amount in the Operating Fund to start this year. Your contributions and the use of prior carry-forward funds from recent years made this possible.

Three more cheers for all of you! Additionally, over \$48,000 was received in special designated giving. These gifts were essential to programs including our missionaries, missions projects, Warming Center, MCREST, STARS/XCEL, Friend in Need, and the food pantry.

Again, three more cheers for all of you! Nearly \$41,000 was also received to be used for our Brighter Future Building Fund projects. More will be shared on these projects in the future.

Now we are looking forward to 2023. Based on our recent stewardship program and projections for other income, we anticipate our Operating Fund income to be consistent with last year (around \$365,000). We also anticipate our expenses in 2023 to be consistent with last year (around \$426,000). This means our projected income will fall short of what we need by approximately \$60,000. And, unlike the last two years, we do not have carry-forward funds to fall back on.

Finance Committee worked hard in preparing the 2023 Operating Fund budget to ensure the budget accurately reflects spending which is necessary. If you have questions or would like more information, feel free to contact Mary Dolenga, Chairperson. This year (2023) will be a pivotal year for Utica UMC as we look for ways to acquire additional income for our ministries. If you have ideas or suggestions, please share them with someone from Finance Committee or the office.

God is faithful. We will continue to be good stewards of the resources we are provided. And, we trust God will provide what is needed, when it is needed.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

I think a lot of people made resolutions this year to be kinder. It seemed like every time I went out this week people were doing kind things for me. From running ahead of me to open doors for me to not trying to run over me in the parking lot, to helping me with my groceries, to being concerned for me when I tripped and luckily caught myself on the hood of my car preventing injury, good Samaritans were present. As I lay sprawled across my hood holding on to the windshield wiper, a woman came running from several cars away yelling "Are you alright!" Then she wanted to help me into my car. I assured her that I was fine, and I really appreciated her concern. It was my own fault; I was not watching where I was going. It seemed like everywhere I went people were opening doors for me and letting me go first. When I returned home from grocery shopping (bought a chicken for .20 cents a pound. It was the size of a small Robin, but it was .20 cents a pound. I had to have it.) Then I bought a steak for the same price as our first mortgage payment. But I figured it would all balance out. When I returned home from the grocery store the next-door neighbor saw me and came over and helped me carry all the groceries into the house. I had only spent \$135 so there was not very much. (I recall that my food budget was \$40 for 2 weeks for a family of 4 in the early 60's but I also recall how I came to hate Tuna Noodle Casserole). Kindness was rampant that day. Almost makes me want to go grocery shopping again. Kindness is such an easy thing to give and a wonderful thing to receive. God planned it that way so we would care for each other.

Galatians 5:22-26 But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit let us keep in step with the spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking, and envying each other.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day. Let us honor it by our love for each other showing kindness wherever we go. We ask that you be with those who are ill and those who mourn, may they feel your nearness in their lives. Be with Pastor Don and bless his ministry. Be with him as he begins his mission trip this week and be with those who travel with him. Grant them safety in their travel and be with them in their mission. Be with our church Lord, may it be your church, open to all who come. Be with our staff and leaders, guide and protect them. May we be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ, here in this place and in this time. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson



SOUP, CHILI, AND DESSERT COOK-OFF Sunday, February 5, 2023 At 4:00 PM



We will be having a Soup, Chili, and Dessert Cook-off on Sunday, February 5 at 4:00 PM.

- Sign-up to enter in one or more categories. You may also enter more than once in each category. Sign-up sheets are located in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall.
- Come on Sunday, February 5 and sample all the entries. Then "vote" with your dollars (or \$5's or \$10's or more) for your favorite entries in each category. Vote as many times as you want.
- Bring your friends and family – they will enjoy wonder food and fellowship with us.
- All proceeds will be used to support United Methodist Conference initiatives through our Ministry Shares.

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

