



Weekly Messenger

January 20, 2023

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Together in Missions

With the beginning of a new year comes the opportunity to create fresh goals for ministry at Utica UMC. As we search for our calling in the community, our hearts turn to servanthood with our ministry partners. While our selection of ministry programs receiving financial pledges remains nearly the same as 2022, this year we will look to become more “engaged” with our partners through Learning Experiences. TIM will be evaluating how we might provide such experiences during the year to enable our **mission intentions to yield good results**.

Again this year, we are hopeful to arrange for guest speakers to share their ministry experiences with Utica UMC during worship services. Updates from our missionaries Temba Nkomozepi of Zambia and Randy Hildrebrant of Michigan U.P. will help us to see the fruit of our ministry support at work in their programs. We will also explore the opportunity for offering other Learning Experiences through video curriculums for small groups, ministry servanthood outings, and a Tool Collection Drive to support the establishment of a Tool Library at Cass Community Services later this year. While not all of us will be able participate in every experience, we are hopeful that the Holy Spirit will put it on your heart to find the right way for you to learn more about our ministry partners in 2023.

As partners in the connectional ministry of the United Methodist Church, we ask each of you to pray with us for guidance in becoming more engaged with the overall mission of the church, “To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world”. The mission objectives to the Michigan Conference Engage^{mi} program are to Learn, Give and Act. While we have demonstrated our generosity in the Give category by fulfilling our pledged support of ministries, it is our goal to Learn more about our ministry partners and to Act where able to become directly engaged in our mission program. God has great plans for the Utica United Methodist Church.

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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

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The following areas are included in our Utica UMC 2023 Mission Plan:

Missionaries:

Randy Hildrebrant – God’s Country Cooperative Parish.
Temba Nkomozepe – Mujila Falls Agricultural Center.

Michigan:

Baldwin Center – provides service to the Pontiac community
Cass Community Social Services – people living in areas of concentrated poverty in Detroit.
Methodist Children’s Home – serves children and families impacted by childhood trauma.
NOAH Project – empowers low income and homeless Detroiters to achieve stability.

National:

Society of St. Andrews – gleaned unharvested crops to feed people.

International:

Mujila Falls Agricultural Project – addressing sustainable agriculture and training in Zambia, Africa.
Haiti Children Project – providing a Christian home to homeless children.

UMCOR: Supporting programs that respond to disasters.

Utica UMC supports these ministries in addition to our many community based ministries such as MCREST, Food Pantry, Warming Center and Oil Change Ministry. **Praise be to God!**

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.

Red Cross Blood Drive

We will be hosting the Red Cross Blood Drive on Tuesday, February 14th from 11am-5pm. As always registration will be done online at redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

2022 Together in Missions Results

As the pandemic gradually released us back to more “normal” activities, the focus of our ministry efforts during 2022 turned to supporting the needs of others. The need was underscored early in the year after the Russian invasion of Ukraine called for our support of UMCOR to provide immediate relief for refugees of the war. Our heartfelt response were donations totaling over \$2700. Praise God!

One of our goals for 2022 was to highlight each of the various missionaries and ministries supported by our church in an effort to learn more about the mission work being conducted. While most of the highlights were captured in our Messenger newsletter, in May we had Rev. Faith Fowler of Cass Community Services provide the sermon message and share about the progress of this community. A special collection was taken for Cass, and Utica UMC donated over \$1200 in support of this ministry. Later in the year, after the devastating hurricane in the Southeastern U.S., another \$1300 of UMCOR disaster relief support was donated by our church.

During the summer, TIM highlighted the Haiti Children’s Project. In August, school supplies were gathered for the Methodist Children’s Home. For September we collected socks for the “Sock-It-To-September” NOAH Project. A total of 534 pairs of socks were delivered to the Central UMC next to Comerica Park. In October, we collected gently used Men’s Coats and delivered 39 coats to the Baldwin Center in Pontiac. This was followed by our Love Loaf collection in November which provided nearly \$1000 to complete our pledged support for our missionaries. Also, Baldwin Center received over 50 pies from Utica UMC for their Thanksgiving Meal. Finally, our Christmas offering provided an additional \$5700 in donations, exceeding our pledged ministry support by 20% while also providing over \$1400 for our Food Pantry fund. Collectively, these donations support the ministries serving our own local community, metropolitan Detroit, S.E. Michigan, Society of St. Andrew, our international ministries in Haiti, Liberia and Zambia, as well as our missionaries in the Michigan U.P. and in Zambia, Africa. Praise God again!

Last of all, please take a look at our new web page on the Utica UMC website. Look at the “Serve” tab and find our information under “TIM”. We have included links to each of our ministry partners so that you can learn all about the communities served through our mission support.

On behalf of the TIM Team, we are grateful for the many blessings that God has bestowed on His church and the generous, heartfelt donations given by this community of believers for the glory of God! May these offerings bring a fruitful harvest with many new believers brought to Jesus Christ through these ministries.

Utica UMC Together-In-Mission (TIM) Team:

Barry Croteau - Leader
Linda Baker - Secretary/Treasurer
Peggy Miller - Member

Kathy Weaver - Member
Ron Borgacz - Member
Debbie Foskett - Member

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

A Note from the Endowment Committee

Congregation, Celebrate the love of Jesus!

Happy New Year (2023) from the Endowment Committee,

We hope that this letter finds you and your family in good health and ready for the challenges and joys of the New Year. After many years of serving on the Endowment Committee Fran Leo is stepping down. A big thanks to Fran for his dedication and his positive attitude. We are pleased to announce our new member, Martha Dolenga.

It certainly has been a challenging year, especially in the finance world. Many of us saw our saving's accounts shrink, but do not let your hearts be troubled, we all know who is in control and things will get better. Last year, 2022, we disbursed \$8,815 from the Fund, this is the most we have withdrawn since the Fund was established in 2006. Listed below is where the money was used in 2022:

\$1,687 - Stephen Ministry Leadership Training
\$2,528 Round Tables
\$2,000 - STARS/EXCEL Programs
\$600 - Stephen Ministry Conference
\$2,000 - New Celebrate Recovery Programs

This is the first time since we started tracking the Fund that the balance of the Fund did not grow from year to year, that is a very good record. The balance of the Fund at the end of 2022 was \$230,711, at the end of 2021 it was \$285,326. If you add in the 2022 spending our balance would have been \$239,526. Please keep the Endowment Fund in mind, as it is a wonderful way to support the many ministries of our church.

Please consider the Endowment Fund in your estate planning or weekly giving (beyond your regular pledge). If you have any questions about the Endowment Fund, please contact one of the members listed below. The purpose of an Endowment Fund is to provide income on a long-term basis to the many ministries that make our church a vibrant church, a church in which people will find the love and Fellowship that only God can provide. You can now send money to the Endowment Fund through the E- giving feature on the church website. We feel this is **your** Fund and we want the money to be used to better support your group.

We are looking forward to a very special year for UUMC. We will be celebrating the church's 200th anniversary. In today's world that is such an amazing accomplishment.

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow." 1 Corinthians 3:6.

Endowment Committee: Al Manning (Chair) David Clark, Tim and Barb Fisher, Bob Mowers, Martha Dolenga. We would like to wish you and your family a safe and prosperous New Year.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

A LIFE OF PRAYER

I just recently stumbled upon a book of John Wesley's prayers that I have had for years. It is a very small book and has many prayers and writings from John Wesley. He often states that good works are not enough that believing that good works are the way to salvation is not true. Good works are the result of our faith not a substitute for faith. That is building your house on sand. It is said that John Wesley rode more than two hundred thousand miles on horseback to preach more than forty thousand sermons. But underlying all of his amazing achievements was his devotion to prayer. "Prayer is truly, in Wesley's words, "the most useful of all pastimes." My prayer life sometimes suffers from my lack of attention. I always thank God for the day and pray for those I love and those in need of prayer, but I fail to thank him for all those souls that touched my life that day. Last week I wrote of the kindnesses I had been shown by strangers, that has continued this week. While walking through Kroger's and trying to remember why I was there, a woman walking past me said to me, "Your hair is beautiful." Then I went to a restaurant and as I struggled to get out of the booth after eating a chicken salad croissant the size of a small country and holding my purse and cane and the bill and money and a book, a gentleman from a few feet away asked if I needed help getting up and then if I needed help going to my car. People can be so kind, and we need all the kindness we can find in this world right now. How often do we observe something about a stranger but say nothing, never knowing if our observation might lift that person's spirits. I need to do those simple kindnesses and I need to include those done for me with gratitude in my prayer life. John Wesley believed in prayer and was a man of prayer. A John Wesley prayer that is familiar to us follows:

Lord, I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will. Let me be employed by you or laid aside for You, exalted by you or brought low by You. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to Your pleasure and disposal. And now O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, You are mine and I am yours. So be it. Amen

John Wesley died in London in 1791. Having murmured, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," he passed into his Master's presence crying, "Best of all, God is with us."

Lord, we thank you for each day you give us, may we use it in your service. May we share our faith with others always praising and thanking you for the things you have done in our lives and for those souls who touch us with kindness and thoughtfulness. Be with our Pastor as he is on a mission trip and be with those with him. Grant them your strength and resourcefulness as they serve in your name far from their homes, keep them safe. May they feel your presence in their serving as they truly are the hands and feet of Jesus Christ. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve, grant them your mercies. We ask Lord for your blessing on our church and our staff and leaders, guide us always in every action we undertake and may our actions be pleasing to you. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

"O praise God for all you have and trust Him for all you want." John Wesley.

Portions taken from "How to Pray." "The Best of John Wesley on Prayer."

Barbour Publishing 2007

Grace Epperson



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Help & Hope for Single Parents

Being a single parent is difficult, and the truth of the matter is there are a lot of single parents in our sphere of influence. I would venture to say each of us know people who are single parents by choice or by circumstance. Maybe it's one of our children, or grandchildren, or that of a friend. Perhaps it's a grandparent that has had to assume the role of "parent" due to an un-foreseen situation.

If you're a single parent, you're probably tired, overwhelmed and feeling a bit underappreciated. That's why we are again offering a Single & Parenting support group—to share tips and parenting wisdom that will help you find rest, hope and encouragement.

Other people don't truly understand how tough it is to be a single parent—day after day after day. Sometimes you want to give up. And that's a normal reaction—you're doing the job of two people. You should be tired.

The thing is, you deeply desire to do what's best for your kids, but you worry that you can't. Sometimes it's all you can do to survive from one day to the next.

So what can you do?

Single & Parenting groups address these concerns. You'll discover how to deal with your deep-down worries and your day-to-day struggles.

At a weekly Single & Parenting group, you'll meet with other single parents to learn and discuss some amazing parenting strategies and hope-filled insights.

During the 13 weekly biblically based sessions you'll find out how to find true rest: As a single parent, you know what it means to be exhausted. But God offers rest—not just physical comfort, but rest for your soul.

Find out God's surprising plan to put an end to your suffering. You'll discover:

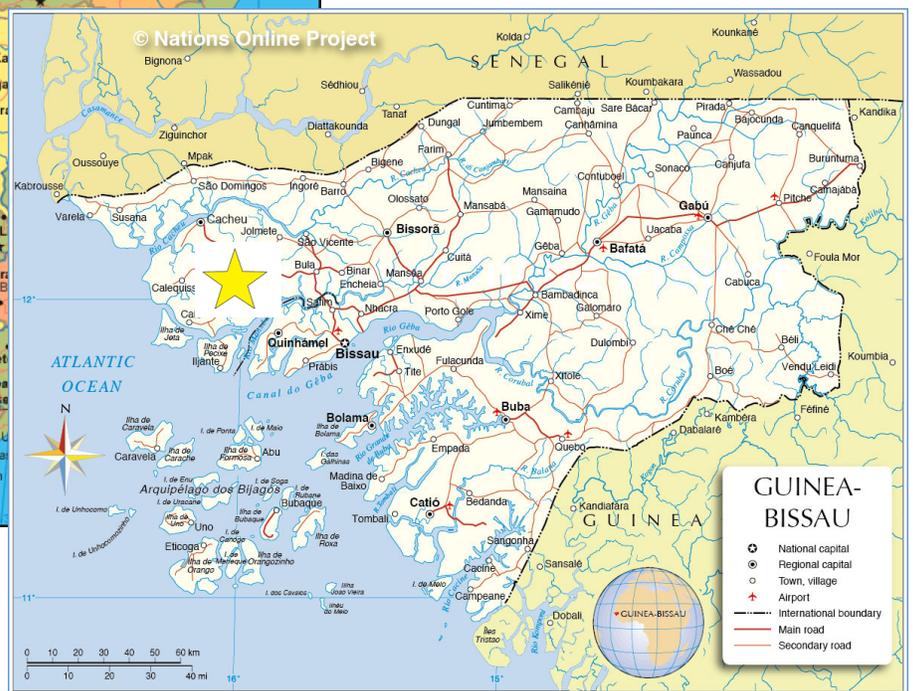
- How God gently cared for a single mom in the Bible
- How God wants to care for you
- What can keep you from experiencing God's comfort
-

Single & Parenting will be offered in conjunction with Celebrate Recovery on Thursday evenings. If you or someone you know are interested in being a part of this amazing ministry, contact Bob or Patsy Clark in person or via mail: celebrate.recovery@uticaumc.org.

The kick-off date will be announced soon.

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Mission Trip to Guinea-Bissau Africa



Pastor Don and the team arrived safely in Guinea-Bissau on Tuesday, January 17th.

In case anyone was curious, Guinea-Bissau is a small country on the northwest part of Africa. There is a yellow star on the blue map to show the location of the country. While they are in Guinea-Bissau they are staying in a town called Canchungo. This is highlighted with the yellow star on the blown up map of Guinea-Bissau.

Please continue to lift of Pastor Don and the mission team this week as they complete their project and will be flying back to Michigan on Sunday, January 29th.

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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

