



Utica United
Methodist Church

Weekly Messenger

February 17, 2023

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Utica United
Methodist Church
8650 Canal Road,
Sterling Heights, MI
(586) 731-7667
www.UticaUMC.org

A Message from Bishop Bard...

Dear Friends in Christ in the Michigan Conference:

Michigan is a big state. Michiganders have big hearts and those hearts are broken today, broken again. The hearts of Michigan United Methodists are broken today, broken again. Last night on the campus of Michigan State University a gunman shot and killed three MSU students. Five other students were also shot and critically wounded, one of whom was a choir member at a United Methodist Church in Lansing. This incident of senseless gun violence has touched so many of us, come close to many of us. In our churches are students, faculty, staff and parents at MSU. I have heard from pastors whose children are students and they have shared with me what a nightmare last night was for them. The pastors in the Lansing area churches are deeply affected, and in the midst of their own pain are offering important ministry to others. I am profoundly grateful for their ministry.

We weep. We mourn. We wonder why. We cry out, "How long, O Lord?" Five years since the shooting at Parkland High School. Eighteen months after the shooting at Oxford High School. We weep. We mourn. We find all that we are experiencing difficult to put into words.

Yet we find words to console. We find words to pray. We offer thoughts and prayers, and that matters. And I keep thinking about the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:9 "Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone?" Thoughts and prayers are needed and necessary. They are certainly more than stones for bread. Yet I wonder if thoughts and prayers without a commitment to further conversation and action that could mitigate such violence is something of half a loaf. Our children are asking for the whole loaf - thoughts, prayers, conversation, action. Let's not offer half a loaf. Let's have conversations about what we can do, remembering that the same Constitution which has a second amendment begins with words about "insuring domestic Tranquility." Who among us considers these frequent acts of gun violence domestic tranquility? I am convinced we can do better. Jesus calls us to be peacemakers, and there is more we can do.

Friends, today I encourage us to focus on our prayers. Let us hold in our broken hearts the students and their families who have been the direct victims of this shooting. Let us hold in our hearts all those who have been traumatized, including the entire MSU community. Let us hold in our hearts our churches and campus ministries reaching out to bring hope and healing. Let us hold in our hearts the surrounding communities. Let us willingly stay open to our broken hearts so as not to "normalize" such tragedy. Hug your children. Embrace your neighbors. Go out of your way to be kind.

In a state where the shout "Go Green" is always met by the shout "Go Blue," today we are all green. Today we are all Spartan strong.
Grace and Peace.

David A Bard

David Alan Bard
Michigan Area Bishop

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



Happy 200th Birthday Utica UMC!

Utica United Methodist Church is 200 years old this year. We have many things planned to celebrate this wonderful milestone. Currently there are polo shirts on sale on Sunday mornings. Cost of the shirts are \$30.00. We do have order forms available in the church office, you can stop in and place an order or call the office. A historical display is going to be going up on the wall in the Parlor in the next couple of weeks.

Please mark your calendars as we look ahead....

March - We will have a Taco and Trivia night on March 11th. See Below for details.....

April 23rd is our big kick-off celebration. Bishop Bard will be in to preach this morning. A meal is also in the planning process. Mark you calendars as you will not want to miss this Sunday of church.

May - Historic Driving Tours and Utica Cemetery Tours are being planned. Let's take a look at our roots and visit the graves of founding members of Utica church.

June - The Car Show will happen again this year on June 3rd. We are also looking at attending a Jimmy John's baseball game on June 23rd.

This year is going to be exciting and full of many different types of events. Start marking your calendars now.



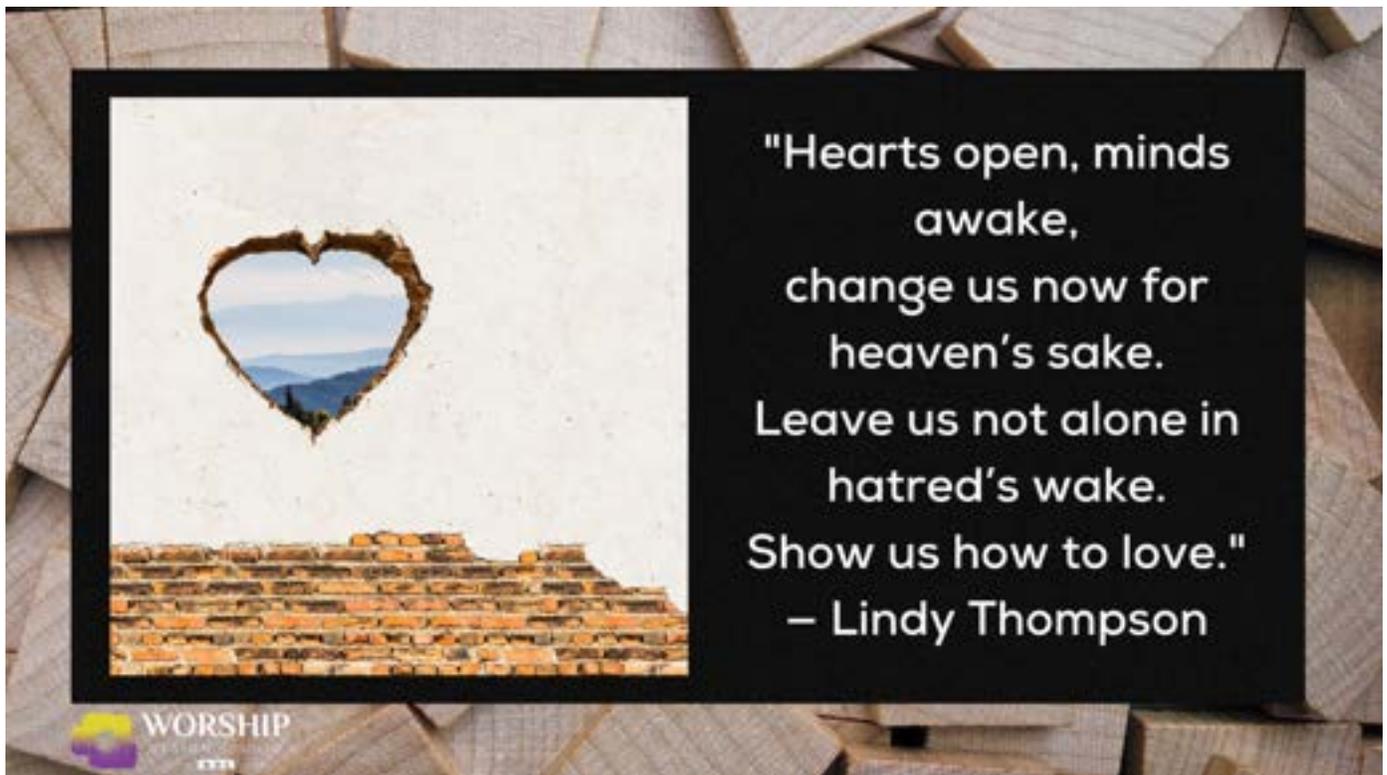
Taco and Trivia Night

Taco and Trivia Night is one of our first kick-off events celebrating our 200 years at Utica. Join us on **Saturday, March 11th** at 5:30pm in Fellowship Hall. There you will enjoy a yummy taco bar along with fun games and trivia. Brush up on your church history as there could be questions regarding this church's past. We are asking for a donation of \$5.00 per person. Kids 5 and younger are free. This money will help offset the cost of this event. Sign up sheets will be out on Sunday. Sign up and invite your friends. This is a great setting to introduce someone to our church.

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Ash Wednesday

The season of Lent is upon us. We have a new Lenten Series titled "Lookin' for Love" and it will kick off with our Ash Wednesday Service on Wednesday, February 22 at 7pm in the Sanctuary. There will not be Kids Club/Youth Group or simple supper this evening. Invite your family and friends to the Ash Wednesday service.



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

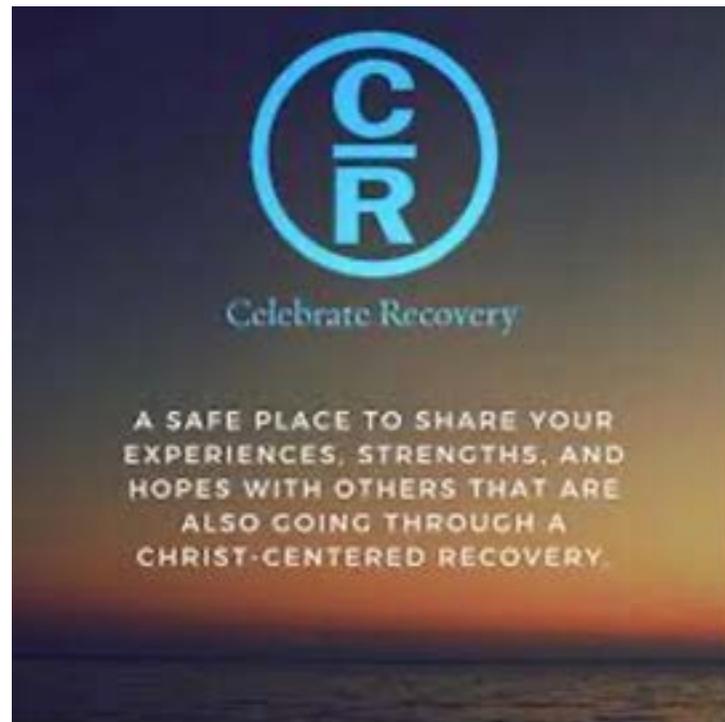
Celebrate Recovery

Celebrate Recovery is a biblical and balanced program that helps us overcome our hurts, hang-ups, and habits. What does that mean? Substance abuse, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, co-dependency, domestic violence, perfectionism, guilt, anger, loss, worrying, gambling, control issues, boundary issues, pornography, sexual addiction, alcohol & drugs, emotional & physical abuse, childhood trauma, and more...

Celebrate Recovery is based on the actual words of Jesus, rather than psychological theory. It was designed as a program to help those struggling with hurts, habits and hang-ups by showing them the loving power of Jesus Christ through a recovery process.

Celebrate Recovery is not intended to replace any other support group. Nor is it a substitute for treatment centers or professional counseling. The focus of *Celebrate Recovery* is to provide a safe group environment where recovering people can gather together and share their struggles and victories. We encourage all people struggling with hurts, hang-ups, and habits, and you are welcome at *Celebrate Recovery!*

Concerned about anonymity? Be assured that attendance at *Celebrate Recovery* and what is said will remain confidential. Although some may choose to make it known that they participate, no one has the right to break the anonymity of anyone who attends. Your privacy will be respected and protected. If you know of someone who could benefit from being a part of *Celebrate Recovery*, or if you wish to be involved, please by all means, do so. **Don't be afraid to change.... Be afraid of staying the same.**



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

Last week the sermon was on letting our light and love of God shine on others. I thought about this as I discovered the light above the stove had burned out and I could not see the stove top as well as I wanted to. It is not a large light, just a 40-watt bulb but it makes quite a difference when I am cooking. I changed the bulb but cannot get the shield back on, but I am working on that. You might ask how I am working on that. I plan on asking my son for help the next time he comes over. Now I am afraid to turn it on for fear something will splatter, and the hot bulb will burst and throw particles all over whatever I am cooking. As I said it is not a huge light but a small light and there are times in people's lives that a small light is what is needed. Never think your light isn't bright enough to make a difference in someone's life. I thought about all the times I had wanted to express my faith to others and had not spoken. I did not give them the light of God's love for fear of being too pushy, too in your face, or thought to be a religious zealot or worst of all not good enough. As a Nurse we were taught not to talk about our religion to our patients. When I worked Afternoons and Midnights, I would make rounds and go in their rooms and say a silent prayer to God for them as they slept, but never did I discuss my faith with them. I did often speak up with friends but sometimes wished my courage had given me more of a push when the opportunity arose. Rev. Gotham also spoke about serving and that we are called to serve. I believe he voiced it as, "Take off your bib and put on an apron!" I do serve but there are many things I did in years past that I no longer do but those "jobs" have been taken over by others even more capable than me. Things like the Prayer Quilting Ministry and the Prayer Shawl Ministry are in very capable hands that are much more talented than I am. I have had the joy of seeing others take charge and enhance things I have done and that has brought me joy. The jobs that I have loved such as ushering and communion go on without me and it gives me joy to see others blooming and growing with these tasks. Helping with funeral luncheons is something that I no longer do. When my husband became ill, I had to let go and I think that is part of God's plan to let others have the blessing of doing. There are three delightful women in our church who will come over and visit with me and have brought me food when they knew I was not doing well. Sometimes we go out to lunch. This week I went out to lunch with one of my favorite friends, it wasn't the ballpark but one of my other favorite places, a wonderful treat. Some days I feel surrounded by God's love when dear friends visit or in the phone calls, I receive from people asking about my health. I may not serve as I once did, but I am surrounded by a cloud of witnesses to God's love. Be that light in your world that shows others the love of Christ to a friend, a relative or even a stranger. I picture our church as being a lot of lights shining together. Some small, some larger, some plain and some trimmed with silver and gold. Like a Christmas tree one light does not make it bright but a lot of lights shining together make it a beautiful sight.

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

2 Samuel 22:29 You are my lamp O Lord; The Lord turns my darkness into light.

Lord, we thank you for this day. May we be the light that draws others to you. Lord, we ask your blessings upon those who are ill and those who mourn. Be with them, may they feel your strength and love surrounding them. Be with our church Lord, light our path. Be with those who are suffering the horror of the earthquakes in Turkey and the war in the Ukraine and those suffering through lawlessness in Haiti. There is so much sadness and anger in our world Lord. May we be a beacon of light to those who seek your path. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and protect him. Be with our staff and leaders, guide them in their work. 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

