



# Weekly Messenger

March 10, 2023

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## Looking for the Thirst-Quencher

This coming Sunday, the sermon will be based on the passage in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of the gospel of John, where Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman at the well. The woman comes to draw water, but Jesus understands her deeper need is to find the love she has been looking for in all the wrong places.

I recall one of my seminary professors telling us this story, and it fits as we get ready to consider what lessons we can gain from the story of the woman at the well.

One day the great Scottish Evangelist Henry Drummond was preparing to leave the home of some friends in the hills of Scotland. They offered him the use of their coach to drive him to the village, where he would catch the train for his next appointment.

“Our coachman is a very wonderful man and quite an unusual scholar,” they told Mr. Drummond, “but he has been defeated by drink. We were hoping that you might have an opportunity to say something to him that will help him.”

So, when the time came to go, Henry Drummond climbed onto the seat next to the coachman, and before the driver realized what was happening, Mr. Drummond had engaged the coachman in an in-depth conversation about his spiritual life. The coachman began confessing his failures and regretting the collapse that had tragically torn apart his life.

“Suppose that as we rode along these curves and hills,” said Mr. Drummond, “the horses you are driving somehow got out of control, and you realized that you could not manage them. However, you suddenly remembered that the man sitting next to you was the finest horseman in Scotland and that there has never been a span of horses that he could not control. What would you do?”

“Oh,” exclaimed the coachman, “is that what Christ expects me to do?” “Exactly!” replied Henry Drummond. “Turn the reins of your life over to him!”

The woman at the well had that kind of experience when she talked with Jesus that day. She went on to tell others about her experience.

I pray each of us can recall our experience of when we encountered Jesus. So many people are looking for the One who can truly quench their thirst. Let’s boldly tell of the change Jesus has made in our lives.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Don

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# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

**Celebrate Recovery is a program designed to help those struggling with Hurts, Habits and Hang-ups.**

Celebrate Recovery is a life recovery program that offers a supportive group environment where hope and acceptance join with God's desire to heal us of our greatest wounds in life. We believe all are in recovery, recovery from sin. Simply put, a hurt, habit or hang up is anything that hinders your relationship with God and with others. Anger, fear, perfectionism, alcohol, overeating, gambling, abuse, divorce, people pleasing— anything that controls you and keeps you from experiencing God's love, grace and true freedom in life is a hurt, habit or hang up. You can choose to live in bondage to these problems and approach them as stumbling blocks or as stepping stones to personal and spiritual growth.

Many people think "recovery" refers only to people struggling with alcohol or drug addiction, but that's just not true. In physical health, recovery is the process of moving from illness to wellness. Our hurts, habits and hang-ups are like an illness that can damage our relationship with others and especially with God. The Bible teaches us that no person is perfect. We've all blown it and we've all made mistakes. We've hurt ourselves, we've hurt other people and others have hurt us.

But there is hope, no matter in what situation you find yourself. Whether your problem is emotional, financial, relational, spiritual, physical, whatever—God wants to help you. Celebrate Recovery offers you the opportunity to be in a safe place to participate in group fellowship where love and hope combine with God's purpose to heal your life.

Is Celebrate Recovery for You?

- Are there things in your life that you do, which cause hurt to others?
- Have others caused you pain or hurt of which you can't let go?
- Is there something you would like to live without or stop doing?
- Is it time to face denial and admit you're not in control of a hurt, habit or hang-up?
- Do you have a painful habit or hang-up from which you need to be freed?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, we encourage you to attend a Celebrate Recovery meeting to explore your possibilities for healing, wellness and spiritual growth.



# **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....

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.

## **Join us every Sunday in Lent to learn how we are "Lookin' For Love."**

March 19 - "Look For The Shepherd"

March 26 - "Look For The Liberator"

### **Looking ahead to Holy Week....**

Palm Sunday - April 2, 2023 - "Look For The Unexpected"

Good Friday Service - April 7, 2023 at 7pm in the Sanctuary -

"Love Looks For Us"

Easter Sunday - April 9, 2023 - "Love Wins"

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## WHAT IS UMCOR SUNDAY?

UMCOR Sunday is March 19, 2023. This is the Sunday that we collect a special offering to Support UMCOR. Below is information about what UMCOR Sunday is all about. Special envelopes will be available in the bulletin on Sunday, March 19th, or you can write UMCOR Sunday on the other line of your normal offering envelope.

Through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) we are able to provide hope for communities and individuals whose lives have been upset by storms, wars, fires, displacement and climate change. This ministry is achieved exclusively through your generosity. UMCOR Sunday is a denomination wide celebration designed to raise awareness and support for UMCOR. The special offering on this Sunday underwrites UMCOR's "cost of doing business" making it possible for UMCOR to focus on responding to communities and individuals when they need immediate assistance. It allows UMCOR to preserve the promise that 100% of any donation to a specific UMCOR project or missionary will go towards that project and not administrative cost.

UMCOR equips local churches, annual conferences and nonprofit organizations to be in mission with their communities and to respond to those left most vulnerable during challenging times. UMCOR responds to U.S. and international disasters, addresses diseases and poverty, assists refugees and immigrants, provides clean water and works to reduce hunger. UMCOR doesn't just respond to the emergency for the short term. Working with local organizations, churches in the community and United Methodist volunteers, UMCOR builds relationships and helps communities rebuild, in the years following a disaster.

UMCOR would be unable to do this work without your support. By covering the operational cost on UMCOR Sunday, you equip the organization to respond when hope and safety is needed most. You strengthen the ministry and secure our ability for UMCOR to share God's love with communities everywhere.



**SPECIAL SUNDAY** UMCOR SUNDAY

In 1940, The Methodist Committee on Overseas Relief was founded as a "voice of conscience among Methodists to act in the relief of human suffering without distinction of race, color, or creed."

 Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.  
The people of The United Methodist Church®

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

It seems as we grow older, we see more of the kindness of strangers. I am often amazed at the thoughtfulness and actions of strangers. I am especially pleased when I have seen strangers urging their children to do a good deed for me. Now that I am older, I often have observed parents telling their young children to go ahead of me and open a door. This gives me hope for this world. To teach our children to help those that are elderly or perhaps handicapped or those in need is one of the best things we can do as a society. I recall us stopping on M53 years ago to help an elderly woman walking along the expressway pushing a lawn mower. She would once a week walk the distance from her home to her sister's home and cut her sister's grass. We gave her a lift for most of her journey until she insisted, she could easily manage the rest of the distance. When she got out of the car, I once again gave my children the lecture about picking up hitchhikers, but my words were diluted by our actions. I wanted them to know that sometimes we are called to measure the circumstances.

Jesus tells us the story of how to treat strangers in the gospel of Luke.

Luke 10:30-37 Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came to where the man was and when he saw him, took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the Innkeeper. Look after him, he said, and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have. Which of these do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

Dear Lord, help us to remember we are yours and you are our God. Be with us each minute of each day and may we reflect on your word. May we find ways to feed the hungry, clothe those in need, and bind the wounds of those who hurt, and may we seek out those who want to know you. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve. We thank you Lord for each other. May we offer our help to those who seek your word. Be with those who suffer from war in the Ukraine and those in Turkey and Syria still suffering from the earthquakes. Help us Lord to bring safety to our schools and places we gather. Safety to our churches, temples, and synagogues. Be with our Pastor and bless his ministry and be with his family. Be with our Staff and Leaders, bless their work and give them inspiration. Be with those who are not with us in the Winter months and with those who take the opportunity to travel to help others, our members in the Nomads. Grant them safety and bring them safely back to us. We thank you Lord for the days you give us may we use them in your 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

