



Weekly Messenger

March 17, 2023

IN THIS ISSUE:

Holy Week

Happy Birthday Events

Celebrate Recovery

Devotional

Back Page Info

Still Entralled

When I came to faith in Jesus over forty years ago, my life changed. One of my new church friends had been in a contemporary Christian music group. From him, I became acquainted with a whole new genre of music – Christian Contemporary music. One of the artists (Michael Card) I enjoyed had a style some said was more like speaking to music. I listened to his music so much I wore out the cassette tape. I still recall one of his songs, and it ties in with the Gospel Lesson for Sunday. It is titled, “The Gentle Healer.” These are the lyrics.

The Gentle Healer came into our town today
He touched blind eyes and the darkness left to stay
More than the blindness, He took their sins away
The Gentle Healer came into our town today
The Gentle Healer came into our town today
He spoke one word that was all He had to say
The One who had died just rose up straight away
The Gentle Healer came into our town today

Oh, He seems like just an ordinary man
With dirty feet and rough but gentle hands
The words He says are hard to understand
And, Yet, He seems like just an ordinary man
The Gentle Healer, He left our town today
I just looked around and found He'd gone away
Some folks from town had followed Him, They say
That the Gentle Healer is the Truth the Life the Way

Sometimes as we mature in faith, we can forget how it all seemed new and how we were anxious to soak up as much of Jesus as we could. In the message on Sunday, I will be talking about the miracle of Jesus healing the man who was born blind. Sadly, instead of choosing to marvel in the miracle, the Pharisees debated whether it was a true miracle and if Jesus should have healed the man on the Sabbath.

I pray we all take some time to get in touch with the part of ourselves that still marvels in Jesus and is thrilled to know more about him. I also pray we shake off the inclination to make all of our faith into some sterile analytical exercise by which we try to exclude the things from our life that bring us a sense of awe.

Still entralled with the Gentle Healer,

Rev. Don

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

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

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 -
A Tenebrae Service featuring the Chancel Choir

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



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. Check out the historical display in the parlor or in Fellowship Hall.

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. We will be having a catered meal following the second service at about 12:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. The menu for the meal is below. The cost will be \$20.00 per person. Children under 18 are free. Sign up sheets will be out starting March 19th.

- Italian Sausage with sautéed assorted peppers and onions
- Chicken w/artichokes, capers, and lemon with a light white wine sauce
- Oven roasted potatoes
- Green beans with sautéed garlic and butter
- Garden salad with balsamic vinaigrette on the side.
- Rolls and butter
- Pasta with marinara sauce and Parmesan cheese on side

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.
- Perennial Plant Exchange on Saturday, May 20th from 10am-1pm. Please bring transplants or plant seeds in individual containers and labeled to swap. If you don't have plants to swap but are looking for plants, they can be purchased for a small donation. Proceeds will be donated to the Tomlinson Arboretum in Clinton Township. Tables, chairs and light refreshments will be provided.

June -

- The Car Show will happen again this year on June 3rd from 9am to 3pm.
- It will be Utica UMC night at Jimmy John's field on June 23rd. Tickets will be sold after Easter and will be \$38.00 a piece. More information and flyers will be available in April.

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



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Celebrate Recovery is for EVERYONE with Hurts, Habits, and Hang-up's.

Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered program with foundations firmly established in Biblical truth. The 12 Steps with accompanying Scriptures and the 8 Principles based on the Beatitudes offer participants a clear path of salvation and discipleship; bringing hope, freedom, sobriety, healing, and the opportunity to give back one day at a time through our one and only true Higher Power, Jesus Christ. The 12 Steps and the 8 Principles work seamlessly together, tying historical recovery to timeless Biblical teaching.

WHO IS CR FOR?

Ask yourself the following questions:

Do you have trouble setting limits for yourself?

Do you sacrifice your identity, desires or needs to make others feel good about themselves?

Do you struggle feeling safe when you are not in control?

Do you raise your voice to get your way?

Do you act kind on the outside but bitter on the inside?

Do you use food, sex/pornography, relationships, alcohol or drugs to cope with life's problems?

Do you struggle with body image?

Do you ever know the right thing to do but don't do it?

Do you love someone struggling with destructive behaviors such as pornography, drugs or alcohol?

Do you live with someone who abuses you physically, sexually or emotionally or feel the continued effects from past traumas & abuse?

Do you ever know that something is wrong but do it anyway?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, welcome to the human race and Celebrate Recovery where you will find a group of fellow strugglers all working to get well. You will discover that you are not alone and when you share your hurt, habit or hang up with anyone at CR, the most common response you will hear is, "Me too."

CR is a "Me too" kind of place where no perfect people are allowed and all are welcome to participate in a Christ Centered program that heals and sets people free from all hurts, habits and hang ups through the power of Jesus Christ in community with other people.



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

The Disciples

There were 12 disciples working with Jesus. 13 if you count the replacement for Judas. Mathias was the 12th after the death of Judas. *Andrew, a Brother, Peter, Man of Action, James, Unfulfilled Leader, Philip, The Deliberate, James, the Less, Simon, the Zealot, Nathanael, the Forthright, Matthew the Successful Man, Thomas, Twenty-first-Century Man, Thaddaeus, the Questioner, Judas, the Value of a Dollar, John, Love and Thunder, Matthias, Holy Substitute.* Lately I have been thinking about Judas as I often do during lent.

One of the things I wonder about when I think of Judas is, if Judas was preordained to betray Jesus, how is it his fault? He was born to do what he did, how could he do otherwise? I have come to put that aside by realizing we all have choices in our lives, and we are responsible for those choices.

Perhaps God and Jesus saw the weakness in Judas and knew he was perfect for the job. An elderly patient was crying, and I was attempting to comfort her but was having difficulty finding the words. Her son had been taking cocaine and had been driving fast down a two-lane road. He hit a car with a woman in it and she, a wife and mother, had been killed. The elderly patient's son was put in prison for many years. Never once did the elderly woman show sorrow at what another family was going through. She only talked about the unfairness of her only son going to prison when he only had a small amount of cocaine in his system. She was distraught that she might never see him again. I could see and feel her pain, but my heart went out also to the family of the woman killed. Was it ordained that this would be the fate for all these people who were in sorrow or did it come down to choices. A choice to use drugs and drive. Was it the fault of the drugs or the person who bought the drugs. What about the seller, did they not bear some responsibility. Ultimately it was the fault of the son who chose to buy drugs, drive while taking the drugs and break the speed limit and cause an accident that took an innocent life and broke the hearts of a family. Judas had been skimming the purse he was trusted to keep. He was not happy with the way things were going. Did he think as some suggest, that Christ would call down a miracle and overcome Roman rule? Or did he just in his selfish desire for money sell his leader for 30 pieces of silver? Judas was in sorrow over what he had done. Did Judas receive forgiveness from Jesus as he prepared to hang himself? Jesus would have forgiven even Judas and he would forgive the young man, who chose to do drugs, drive and kill another human being, if he repented and sought the Lord.

Matthew 27:3-5 When Judas who had betrayed him saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "For I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us," they replied, "That's your responsibility." So, Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Lord be with us this day and in this time of Lent. May we turn towards the cross and remember the sacrifice given for our sins. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve. Give them comfort and healing. Be with those who suffer from disasters and those who suffer from lawlessness in Haiti. Be with those who are homeless and those who are hungry, lead us to help them, to feed them and offer them respite and comfort. Help us to give from our abundance to those who have nothing. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry, and be with his family. Be with our church, may it be your church, guide us and give us vision and clarity in our mission. Be with our staff and leaders, bless their work, may we be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ here, in this place and may we seek your guidance in our mission. Be with those doing mission work in Florida, bless their work and give them help in their effort and grant them rest and respite in their days off. In Jesus name, Amen

Grace Epperson

*References to Disciples taken from the book "The Thirteen Disciples" by J. Ellsworth Kalas

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

