



# Weekly Messenger

December 1, 2023

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Methodist Church  
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Sterling Heights, MI  
(586) 731-7667  
[www.UticaUMC.org](http://www.UticaUMC.org)

## "The Journey"

Three wise senior men from UUMC decided or more accurately had a premonition and thus a strong motivation to go to Flint to see a reported religious artifact. These supposed wise smart men had never been to Flint, but they had Goggle Maps. I know what you are thinking, there aren't that many smart senior men at UUMC, and I have purposely withheld their names. However, these three were bold, courageous, and had a righteous endeavor on their side. One of the three, considered the smartest, decided that they should ride bikes, and not use any restaurants or hotels along the way. They had this dream that this artifact would arrive on 12/25, something immense, something grand, something enormous. So, on December 15, they started out from UUMC. So what that it was wintertime?

Our brave three started out each with 80-pound backpacks. It wasn't too long before some minor, itchy-bitsy complaining started as senior men are known to do. The fact that they hadn't cleared the parking lot...oh well.

Our intrepid three pushed onward and overcame flat tires, broken chains, cold snowy nights, and continuous cars honking at them and people yelling, "get off the road".

Arrived on the 25th.....

Instead of a huge statue of a warrior man adorned with gold and silver armor, they find a baby. This is the God of All, this is the most powerful, the most knowing, and He was crying and wanted food. That's it, a baby! They thought that the statue of the warrior would come alive and be the Messiah. The gifts they brought would befit a warrior king. This was not what the God of the Universe was expected to be. This was completely radical!

However, our three seniors were wise enough to conclude that this was the Son of God. All the hours and hardships of their journey was worth their time to offer reverence and witness God's amazing gift to humanity. How the God of all that is wanted so much more for us that He physically entered the human situation, was a lot to try to absorb.

PRAYER:

Lord, help me to remember these three and their journey. Should I ever see the need to travel to do your will, let me see it and go without hesitation. If that journey is to drive to a food center for pickup way across town, or to move from one table to another to sit with someone after church and console them. Place me in a position to see the need, and I know you will give me the strength. Lord, also help me to be amazed at your gift of the baby Jesus, so unlike and unexpected by us humans, but proves that God's plans are always and always right.

Written by Bob MacKool

# 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. Please consider inviting your friends and family or neighbors to the different events we will be having. This is a great way to reach out to our community and extend an invitation to someone new.

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

### December -

- 3rd - Holiday Bell Concert - 3pm
- 9th-10th - Cookie Walk
- Christmas Eve 9:30am - "Three Perspectives"
- Christmas Eve 10:30am - A Family Christmas Celebration - "The First Christmas"
- Christmas Eve 8:00pm - Candlelight, Carols and Handbells

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

### ***A Carillon Christmas***

**2023 Handbell and Pipe Organ Christmas Concert  
Featuring: The Gosbells Handbell Choir**

**Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 at 3pm**

Utica United Methodist Church  
8650 Canal Road  
Sterling Heights, MI 48314



**Presented by: The Music Ministry of Utica United Methodist Church**

**\*\*Concert Admission is Free\*\***

An afterglow of light refreshments will be enjoyed by all at the conclusion of the concert!

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



## **ATTENTION COOKIE LOVERS!**

The Annual Christmas Cookie Walk is just around the corner. We will be open for the community and congregation this year on Saturday, December 9 (10 AM – Noon) and to the congregation on Sunday, December 10 (after services). We need your help as bakers and buyers for this to be a success!

**BAKERS** – It's time to find your favorite recipes or some new ones and stock up on supplies. Sign-up sheets will be available after services beginning Sunday, November 19 for you to indicate how many cookies you will donate. Your cookies can be dropped off Tuesday 12/5 – Friday 12/8 during regular office hours (8 AM – 2 PM). Because the sale is open to the community on Saturday, it is important your cookies are dropped-off by Friday, December 8.

**SPREAD THE WORD** – Please tell your friends and family to come to the Cookie Walk Saturday, December 9 from 10 AM – Noon or Sunday, December 10 after services. If you are a Face Book user, please "Like" our Cookie Walk event or better yet "Invite" your friends and family. Printed flyers are also available at church for you to take and share with others.

**COOKIE EATERS** – Don't miss out on this opportunity. If you are a cookie connoisseur or you simply enjoy eating cookies, mark these dates on your calendar so you can fill a container (or two or three) with a variety of great cookies. Free will donations will be appreciated. All donations will be used for the many ministries and projects we support.

## **Christmas Ornaments**



This year we will be offering you the opportunity to purchase a Cardinal ornament in honor or in memory of a special person in your life. The ornaments will be on display for the Advent Season on trees outside the church office or by the Fellowship Hall entrance. You may take your ornament home on Sunday, December 17th or Sunday, December 24th.

Ornaments will be sold after services beginning November 26. They are \$15.00 a piece or 2 for \$25.00. There are a limited number of ornaments available, so place your order soon, with your payment. Please make checks out to Utica UMC.

Funds will be used towards ministries of the church.

## **United Women in Faith**

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, December 13th in Fellowship Hall. We will begin with a potluck luncheon at noon. Bring a dish to share and your place setting as well as something for the mini pantry.

At 1:00pm we will have a program entitled "**Mary's Christmas Story.**" All women are welcome to attend.



# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Coats for Kids

My friend at the elementary school has a coat closet for the students and they are in need of some coats especially for their older students. If you have any gently used girls or boys coats or would like to purchase a coat for a child, I am looking for larger size coats. Boys and Girls Large, XL or XXL and Men's or Women's small or medium. If you are cupboard cleaning and have some smaller coats, they will accept those as well. Please bring to church by Sunday, December 10th, so they can be delivered and handed out to those students who need a coat. You can drop off to the office or leave at the coat rack outside the office.

Thank you!

## Quilt Raffle

There is currently an online raffle happening for a quilt made from fabric bought and brought back from Pastor Don's trip last year to Africa. The proceeds of the raffle will be used in the purchase of construction material for projects that will be worked on in January. The raffle is online - please follow the link <https://dewinggoods.betterworld.org/giveaways/guinea-bissau-team-2024-quilt> or scan the QR code. The raffle is open until 8pm on December 15th and the drawing will take place at 9pm on December 15th. An e-mail address is needed when you purchase the raffle tickets as that is where you will receive a confirmation of your ticket as well as to be notified should you win the quilt.



# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## HOPE OF THE WORLD

The Jews had been waiting for a warrior king to rescue them. God sent them a babe. A babe that was the son of a young girl and a carpenter. A son of God the Father. A babe that would grow into a man who could perform miracles. He taught in the temple as a child. Then grew to turn water into the finest wine, to feed 5000 from two fish and five loaves of bread and had leftovers, he changed lives from sinners into forgiven people, to raise dead people, to heal lepers and cure illnesses and drive out demons. He taught not violence and release from oppression but love and caring for each other and faithfulness to God by how we treat those around us and that that is how we honor God. And it all began with a baby. Every year we celebrate the birth of that child. Once again, we sing the familiar hymns, Silent Night, O Little Town of Bethlehem, I heard the Bells on Christmas Day, and more. We give gifts to friends and family. We light Advent candles. We celebrate and sometimes we realize it's not about us but a love that lasts from before our birth and beyond to eternity. We give from our abundance to the poor. And sometimes we forget the Christ in Christmas. What is that saying? The reason for the season!

Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine. Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign.

Luke 2:4-7 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David. Because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

Dear Lord, we thank you for the gift of a savior, for the Christmas season. May we remember those who are poor, and may we give them from our bounty, may we remember those who are ill, and may we aid them, may we remember those who are suffering and may we comfort them. Be with us Lord in all we do. Be with our church Lord, may it be your church. Be with our Pastor and bless his ministry, give him strength for the tasks before him and may he feel the love and support from those he serves. Be with our staff and leaders, bless what they do for your church. Be with those who suffer from the turmoil happening around the world. We pray in the name of Jesus the Christ who came as a child. In Jesus 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 - Friday  
8:00am-2:00pm

### Mini Pantry

Food and Monetary  
Donations are being  
accepted.

Suggested foods are eat  
and go items (tuna packs;  
cracker items; granola  
bars; fruit cups; salty  
snacks

### 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/Bookkeeper

**Rachelle Heldt**  
rachelle@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 Rachelle Heldt  
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](http://www.uticaumc.org)**  
If you need assistance, call the church office.

**Celebrate Recovery, Thursday, 6:30pm**



**CELEBRATE RECOVERY**  
God Never Wastes a Hurt!