



Weekly Messenger

December 22, 2023

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The staff of Utica UMC wish you a very



Mer Renne

Rachelle Heldt

Rev. Don Gotham

David Fox

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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 -

- 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
- December 31st - 1 Service at 9:30 followed by a brunch in Fellowship Hall

Christmas Eve Morning
9:30am - Sanctuary
"Three Perspectives"



Christmas Eve Morning
10:30am - Fellowship Hall
"The First Christmas"



Christmas Eve
8:00pm - Sanctuary
Candlelight, Carols and Bells



New Years Eve Morning

Everyone is invited to join us on Sunday, December 31st for 1 service at 9:30am followed by a brunch in Fellowship Hall at 10:30am. The sermon title is "Will you hold my baby?" based on Luke 2:22-35.

This service will be a wonderful reminder that God sent His Son into our care as a baby. How will we hold onto the gift of His child throughout the coming year? The brunch following will be a wonderful event to share in a meal and fellowship with each other to celebrate the coming new year.

This is the last Sunday to sign up for the brunch on December 31st. Please let us know you are coming so we can plan for enough food.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



The loss of a loved one is not easy. It may be hard for you to feel optimistic about the future right now. When you've lost a spouse, child, family member, or friend, you've probably found there are not many people who understand the deep hurt you feel.

This can be a confusing time when you feel isolated and have many questions about things you've never faced before.

"Going to GriefShare feels like having warm arms wrapped around you when you're shivering."

GriefShare will return to Utica United Methodist Church on:
Thursday, January 18th 2024 at 6:30 PM in Fellowship Hall

If you or anyone you know could benefit from attending GriefShare contact:

Bob or Patsy Clark

or

Register at: www.griefshare.org/findagroup



It's hard to believe we've had an active Celebrate Recovery Group at Utica United Methodist Church for a full four years. This Christ centered ministry has changed so many lives, offered so many opportunities to help others get over the things that they need to get over.

Celebrate Recovery is a safe place, a place where it's OK not to be OK. We have a saying at Celebrate Recovery **"No perfect people allowed. All others are welcome."**

Join us on January 4, 2024 as we enter year five. We meet each Thursday at 6:30 PM in Fellowship Hall.

Let the healing begin!

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

OPERATING FUND YEAR-END GIVING

It seems like everywhere we turn there is a financial appeal from one charity or another. All of them are in need of additional financial resources to be able to do more good. In the midst of all of these requests, Utica UMC will also appreciate your year-end gifts to ensure we are able to meet all of our 2023 expenses and have sufficient resources to start the new year.

Giving to the Operating Fund probably doesn't tug at your heart quite as much as someone needing food or medical assistance. But, the Operating Fund is the foundation which enables us to provide all the ministries we do for others. And, because we no longer have any resources from previous years to rely on, every dollar you give makes a difference.

Along with your contributions, we will use the proceeds from our Cookie Walk and Memory Tree Ornament sale to meet our remaining obligations for 2023. The Christmas Offering has been designated by Together-in-Mission (TIM) to fulfill our pledges to the mission ministries we support near and far. These mission ministries are independent of the Operating Fund.

We are grateful for your faithful giving now and throughout the year.

Mini Pantry

Thank you to all who continue to support the Mini Pantry. Our church continues to be a blessing to our neighborhood and those suffering from food and hygiene insecurities. We are collecting cans of tuna, chicken and Vienna sausages (can) throughout December. Place your items in the Wagon of Hope.

Holiday Office Hours

The church office will be closed on:

Friday, December 22nd

Monday, December 25th

Tuesday, December 26th

Monday, January 1st

2023 Donations - Year End

The end of 2023 is almost upon us. Please make sure that all donations that you wish to be included in your 2023 giving are to the office by Sunday, December 31st. All money received by/on December 31st will be included on your 2023 giving statement. Any money received after December 31st will be counted in 2024. Online donations need to be made by December 31st to be counted in 2023. As long as the online payment is initiated on December 31st you will receive credit for 2023 giving. Anything that is dated after December 31st will be included in the 2024 giving year.

Please remember to return your Christmas offering by December 24th if possible. There is an online giving option for Christmas Offering through e-giving.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Talking With God

Christmas is almost come and gone. We have once again received the gift of the Savior. The babe has come. I love this time of year and rarely sleep in December. I become so excited about the shopping and gift giving and the gift receiving. I think about Christmas's past and my children when they were little and their excitement as they waited for Santa Claus. The Christmas eves that they received the Christ child and their wonder at it all. The time they spotted "the star" shining bright in the sky and were convinced they were looking at "the star" that led the Wise Men to Bethlehem, and I knew that it was the same Star that shone so brightly on that special night so long ago. It was a very bright star on a clear night, and I still remember their excitement. Oh, to see Christmas through the eyes of a child. To know God through their hearts. My granddaughter recently called me to tell me about my great grandson saying his nightly prayers. He asked her if it was okay to tell God a joke. She assured him that she thought that would be fine. He said in his prayer, "God how did the polar bear catch fish?" Then continued, "With his bear hands." He has been learning a lot of jokes, coincidentally this started with his Great Grandma Grace's visit this summer. I decided to introduce the two great grandchildren to knock knock jokes which they loved and then discovered that they could get even more from Alexia and entertained us all day with knock knock jokes. But as my granddaughter was relating the story of her child wanting just to please God with a joke, I thought if only we could please God in our prayers like a child. It seems as if most of my prayers are asking to receive or asking for guidance or healing for others. A child wanted to please God with the only gift he could give, a joke that he had just learned. He is developing a relationship with God that we should all strive for, a relationship of giving instead of receiving, a relationship of pleasing God instead of a relationship of expectation of pleasing us from God. A relationship of giving what he had to give and wanting God to receive his gift. My wish for all this Christmas is that we accept God and Christ with the belief and trust of a child and that we give what we are able to give to further God and his glory. Maybe not a joke but maybe a gift of service, a gift of loving all God's children, of talking to God with all our heart and trust that he is listening.

Matthew 18:1-4 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles themselves like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Lord, We come to you this day thankful for the day you have given us, thankful for the gift of a babe, laid in a manger, who would go on and claim all people in your name, who would lay down his life for the forgiveness of our sins, who would teach us how to love in your name with forgiveness and acceptance of all your children. We thank you for the gift of our Pastor and his leadership, we thank you for those in our midst who give so willingly to serve you, our leaders and workers. May we serve you with your guidance by serving those who hunger for sustenance and your word. May we follow wherever you lead us always in your service with trust and to your glory. 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**
If you need assistance, call the church office.

Celebrate Recovery, Thursday, 6:30pm

