



Utica United  
Methodist Church

# Weekly Messenger

February 2, 2024

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Mini Food  
Pantry

Blood Drive

Chili Cook Off

Tacos and  
Trivia

Shirt Sale

Tuesday Bible  
Study

Devotional

Back Page  
Info

## "What r u up 2?"

Our children and grandchildren send messages in what can seem to some to have been written in code. "what r u up 2?" isn't too hard to decipher. It will be our theme for the season of Lent. Often, we come to Lent and are asked what we plan to give up for the season. It is a reasonable way to approach the season, as we recall that Jesus was tempted and went without food for forty days in the wilderness before taking on his ministry. To mark that significant sacrifice, the church has asked people to consider what they would give up during the season of Lent.

Growing up in a neighborhood that was heavily Roman Catholic, I sometimes wondered why we didn't have to give up something for Lent at our house. Most of our neighbors and many of our friends gave up things like candy, chocolate, soda, and other treats. I also recall how irritable many of them were until about the fourth week.

For the season of Lent this year, I won't be asking folks to give up something to make the season impactful for them. Instead, I will be asking us all to consider what we should be up to during the season. We will do this by looking at what Jesus is up to in our scripture passages throughout the season. As we consider the example Jesus set for us, we will ask the Holy Spirit what we should be up to as faithful followers of Christ.

I look forward to sharing this season of Lent with you and listening for the Spirit's guiding us to what we are called to be up to.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Don

## Ash Wednesday

You are invited to join us this Lent season as we kick off the Lenten series "What r u up 2?" on Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday Service is February 14th at 7pm in the Sanctuary. Let us explore how we can be up to something and doing something of service to God instead of giving up something this season.

Utica United  
Methodist Church

8650 Canal Road,  
Sterling Heights, MI

(586) 731-7667

[www.UticaUMC.org](http://www.UticaUMC.org)

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Mini Pantry Update

As our Mini Pantry enters a new year we have learned much in a very short period of time. We believe the folks frequenting the pantry are not necessarily homeless but those suffering from “food insecurities” for various reasons. We have determined that the microwaveable food items, convenient food items and snack items are going rather quickly, while the foods that provide a meal and/or side dish for a family meal are all too often left behind.

So...where do we go from here?

January, February, March and early April will continue to provide challenges due to the potential severe weather which limits the food that we can use to stock the pantry. We cannot place items that will freeze and potentially explode. Signage has been placed inside the Mini Pantry to inform our donors of the concerns going into the long winter months. There is still much we can do, we just need to “think outside the box”. We are asking for donations of food staples that will not be compromised in severe temperatures.

A “communications board” will be placed next to the **Wagon of Hope** with updated needs for the Mini Pantry. We are moving towards a system that will allow us better and more accurate monitoring of the food items donated and utilized by those seeking our help. We believe this has been a wonderful outreach ministry for UUMC. The congregation has richly blessed the success of this outreach and for that we are truly grateful. Our community has provided both financial and food assistance as so many have learned of this incredible outreach.

Please watch for updates via the Communications Board, The Messenger, UUMC Facebook and occasional announcements from the pulpit.

If you have questions and/or concerns please feel free to contact:

Melanie Kuzia  
Jim and Liza Young  
Ron and Martha Powers.

## Blood Drive - February 13th 11:00 - 5:00

There were three blood drives last year at UUMC, with a total of 73 units of blood collected. Each unit of blood saves three lives. This calculates to 219 lives saved in our community. That is an amazing accomplishment. A big thank you to all the people who took the time to donate their blood, you know who you are.

Again this year there will be three blood drives, all on Tuesdays from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. The dates are: **February 13th, June 11th and October 8th**. If you are able please consider donating blood this year, it is a very rewarding experience.

To make an appointment you can contact the Red Cross at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) or call them at 1-800-733-2767.

Remember, you can not buy blood at Walmart. If you are not able to give blood, but would still like to volunteer you can help out at the canteen table. A couple of hours would be helpful, plus you get free goodies. There is also a need for help at the end of the drive to put all the tables and chairs back to their original location. Another way to help out is to bake some home baked cookies, a dozen or two is plenty. Contact Al Manning or Bob Baldwin if you are interested in volunteering your time.

Blood Drive Team

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



## Tacos and Trivia Night!



Join us on Saturday, February 10th at 3pm for Tacos and Trivia. Cost is \$7.00 per person 12 years and up. This will be a fun evening out, sign up after services on Sunday or call or e-mail the church office.

## LAST CHANCE SHIRT SALE!

We still have a few more commemorative Utica UMC polo shirts and some of the previous navy blue “serving the community for nearly 200 years” tee shirts. We will be selling these at reduced prices starting Sunday, January 28, while supplies last! If you wish to purchase one, please stop by the table in the Parlor or Fellowship Hall after services or contact Mary Dolenga. The shirts will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis. Thank you!

## Tuesday Morning Bible Study

The Tuesday Morning Bible Study will begin a new study on Tuesday, February 6th at 11:30 in the Conference Room.

The Story Continues  
The Acts of the Apostles for Today  
by J. Ellsworth Kalas.

This is a 12 week study with questions and discussion at the end of each chapter. This book is available on Kindle or through Amazon Prime. Please contact Martha Powers at (586)703-1668 with any questions.



## CHILI, SOUP, AND DESSERT COOK-OFF Sunday, February 25, 2024 4:00 PM



It's time to look for your favorite recipes and some new ones. We will be having a Chili, Soup, and Dessert Cook-off on Sunday, February 25 at 4:00 PM in Fellowship Hall.

- Sign-up sheets will be available starting February 11. You may enter in one or more categories and you may enter more than once in each category.
- Prizes will be awarded for the top 3 entries in each category and for the top overall entry.
- Come Sunday, February 25 at 4:00 PM and sample all the entries. You don't need to enter to participate. “Vote” with your dollars (or \$5's or \$10's or more) for your favorite entries in each category. Vote as many times as you wish.
- Bring your friends and family – they will enjoy wonderful food and fellowship with us.
- Proceeds will be used to support the United Methodist Conference through our Ministry Shares.

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## SERVING

Rev. Gotham's sermon this week was on serving. I have always felt incomplete if I didn't have a "job" in the church. When I joined the church at 15, I would sing in the choir which some Sunday's was my sister-in-law and I. I have since been told that I should not sing in church because I can't carry a tune in a basket. I now sing quietly so as not to disturb others. The only ones that want me to sing are my granddaughters Lauren and Britt. They not only want me to sing but will encourage (demand) me to sing. My son can't hear me, so I am safe with him. My husband, who had a wonderful voice always encouraged me to sing and was great about my voice and we would frequently sing loudly in the car especially to those old songs we both knew. We especially liked Johnny Cash. One time the choir director kept asking me to join the choir since my husband was in the choir. She spread the choir out through the sanctuary one Sunday and she stood next to me, so I belted out a song. She never asked me again. I decided early that singing wasn't for me as service but I loved children and so I taught 4- and 5-year-olds in Sunday School. I started out in the nursery but liked the interaction with the 4- and 5-year-olds. I tried Junior High one year, but this one precocious boy wanted "Song of Solomon" and requested every week that we read that. I decided I liked 4- and 5-year-olds. I began to serve in different ways committees, quilting, prayer shawls, ushering, communion, greeting, prayer ministry, there are many opportunities to serve. Many years ago, I took the test to learn where I might want to serve. Leadership committees were the answer (I was already doing this and found it to be my "niche." Recently I retook the test and found my interests and areas had completely changed. The last time I took the test I was much younger and over the years my talents, interests, abilities have changed. I was surprised that I had changed and that what once was my interest was now different. If you took the test a long time ago you also might want to take it again just to see how you have changed and what your interests are now. If you want to serve in some capacity, give me a call and I will help you get connected. My number is in the book.

When I was 18, I was chatting with the Pastor at that time in Madison Heights, Earl Downing. He told me of my responsibility to the church to support it not only with my tithe but with my service. This was important to me because I was leaving home and going to go to Ford Hospital for 3 years of Nurses Training. I didn't know how I would fulfill my pledge to serve as a member of the church. I would have no income for 2 years other than babysitting for the physicians who were residents and that was sparse until I could workdays off for pay and so could not donate. In the beginning we had 40 hours of classes a week and this left little time for other things. The church would notify me if a member of the church was hospitalized at Ford Hospital, and I would go see them and let them know I was there and would be praying for them. I have found in church there are no "small jobs." Every job no matter how little time it takes affects the church. What we do for our church is what makes us the church. Jobs can take time each day or minutes each week or perhaps minutes each month. The important thing is that we raise up our church with each thing we do for it, whether it is praying for others, or serving coffee, whether it is ushering or greeting, whether it is serving on a committee or singing in the choir. Lifting up your church is the best thing you can do for it and not only will your church be better for it but so will you.

Ephesians 2:10: For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works.

Lord, we thank you for this day, may we find ways to serve you in gratitude for the gift. Be with our families, bless them and keep them safe. Be with those who are sick, and those who are grieving. Give them healing and comfort. Be with our Pastor, bless him and be with him in all he does. Be with our staff and leaders, guide and protect them. Be with our church, may it be your church in all things. Be with the hungry and the homeless, may we serve them in your name. Bless us to your service in all things. 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 - 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!