



Utica United
Methodist Church

Weekly Messenger

February 23, 2024

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"Take Up"

I once read the story of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's experience of a Russian Gulag. He described his experiences in gripping ways. Solzhenitsyn once came to the point where he was so weak and discouraged that all he wanted was to die. The conditions of hard labor and the inhumane way he and the other prisoners were treated had exacted a toll.

He understood the beatings that would come his way if he stopped working. He also understood that in his weakened state, the beatings would likely bring about his death. In despair, he decided to let things take their course. He would stop working, lean on his shovel, and the guards would do the rest.

God had other plans. When he paused more than a moment, leaning on his shovel, a fellow Christian used his own shovel to quickly draw a cross in the dirt for Solzhenitsyn to see. Then, before a guard could see it, he erased it.

Solzhenitsyn wrote that his entire being was energized by seeing the cross in the dirt before him. A simple dragging of a shovel in the dirt restored within him courage and hope to go on. Solzhenitsyn said it was a turning point. The encouragement of a crude cross in the dirt, drawn there by a fellow believer, brought him the strength and hope he needed to continue. "The Gulag Archipelago" by Alexander Solzhenitsyn 1973.

This week, we will talk about taking up our cross and following Jesus. We often think of this passage's challenge to do what is hard. And while that might be true, let's not lose track of the other side of the equation; that is, when we do the hard thing, it should benefit someone else. Taking up the cross can be hard, but it is also a blessing, optimally, for us and others.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Don

Utica United
Methodist Church

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Sterling Heights, MI

(586) 731-7667

www.UticaUMC.org

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Warming Center Update

We have decided on Friday March 8th, Saturday March 9th, and Sunday March 10th at 2:00 pm for making lunches and the dinners.

100 Dinners - Friday, Saturday, Sunday
100 lunches - Friday, Saturday and Sunday - Not Bologna, Turkey, Ham and cheese, and peanut butter / Jelly?

Additional Support Needed:

- General Shelter Funds – We are getting no federal funding
- Food & Meal Donations
- Beverage Donations
- Operating Supplies (janitorial supplies, kitchen supplies, check-in supplies)
- Bus Passes – we suggest purchasing Reduced 4 Hour Regional Passes that are good for both DDOT & SMART buses. They are only \$0.50 per pass. To adequately provide bus passes for our client, the cost would be approximately \$840 per week. That would be 2 bus pass for each person up to 120 clients

Volunteers Needed:

5pm-9pm (2-4 volunteers) – Kitchen – preparing and serving meals
6pm-10pm (4-8 volunteers) – Check In – includes security, checking bags, distributing linens, providing names tags and numbers, etc.
11pm-6am (1-2 volunteers) – Overnight – washing linens, assisting clients if needs arise at night, etc.
6am-10am – (2-4) Check Out clients in the morning, help with setting up breakfast and general clean up

Please note that there will always be a MCMM staff member on site. If you have more volunteers, we will find them a job to do. And if you have less volunteers, we will make it work! We are grateful for whoever is willing to help the MCWS out.

Also need help sorting donations of clothing and food.

Please give me a call or text with any questions.
Ron Borgacz 586-243-5538

Mini Pantry on the MOVE

The Mini Pantry has outgrown the space we created in the beginning of this ministry. On Sunday the items were relocated to the lower level, utilizing the space previously used by the Food Bank. Our next step is to organize and continue to rotate product to avoid any expiration of your donations. We are also using a model for other local Food Pantries in which we have determined how much food we will place in the Mini Pantry weekly. We want to be sure we are providing fruits, veggies, protein, breakfast cereal as well as cleaning and hygiene products. Of course some food items will continue to be “on hold” until we are beyond the risk of freezing. As you shop remember that the items listed below are safe and continue to be in demand as we redirect the needs of the Mini Pantry.

- Dry soup mixes.
- Boxes of flavored rice (example Rice-a-Roni)
- Boxes of scalloped and au gratin potatoes
- Boxes of Jell-O or pudding
- Family size cereal rather than individual serving sizes.
- Pancake or waffle mix
- Microwave Popcorn
- Powdered Milk
- Packaged pasta mixes (example Knorr's noodle mixes)

We have discovered our main need no longer focuses on the “homeless population” , rather than those who for various reasons, suffer from food and hygiene insecurities. We also are working to determine if we have such insecurities within our own congregation and if we do how can we lovingly serve our brothers and sisters in Christ.

With thanks and gratitude,
The Mini Pantry Crew

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Acts of Kindness

Do you feel the world is becoming colder? I do not mean the temperature but the attitudes toward each other. In this season of lent, our Pastor has asked us to do kind deeds for others, not to give up something that only has meaning for ourselves but to do something that matters to others. When I think of kind deeds I think of my Son. He was a mechanic working at the Automotive department at the Kmart at 23 Mile Road and Van Dyke. It was not unusual for me to have people see my last name and they would ask if that was my son that worked there. I would admit it and they would tell me how he had helped them with their car. One person told of him coming out in the Parking Lot to change his tire, another of how he had fixed his car when he was sure it was going to cost a lot and getting it fixed much cheaper. The Pastor told me he would not take his car to anyone else. In 1984 he was up North hunting and my brother-in-law's neighbor had been up north hunting and told of meeting this really nice young man with the same last name as my brother-in-law and how his hunting group had been invited to come over to their campsite because they had a portable TV and were going to watch the World Series which I'm sure you all recall featured the Detroit Tigers. I had insisted he have a portable TV because he certainly would not want to miss a single game of this very important event. He was the only boy I knew who took his mother fishing for no other reason than he knew she loved to fish. Now over 40 years later, he takes me to church. I am blessed.

I have had many kind deeds performed for me by friends during this season of Lent and before since my fall Thanksgiving week, from people taking me to doctor visits to taking me for frequent tests and the prayers for my well-being have been felt and appreciated. Meals have been provided and they have given me the pleasure of company and visits. Through the acts of kindness and the prayers offered I have been slowly getting better since Covid and another fall and have felt the love and kindness of a congregation of witnesses. I am forever grateful.

God is asking each of us, "What have you done for me in this season of lent?" Look at what he has done for us through his Son Jesus Christ. I bought a study book recently because I was captivated by the title, "Jesus Chose the Nails."

2 Peter 1:5-7 For this reason make every effort to add to your faith goodness and to goodness, knowledge, and to knowledge, self-control, and to self-control, perseverance, and to perseverance, godliness, and to godliness, mutual affection, and to mutual affection, love.

Heavenly Father, we come to you grateful for all you have given us, for this day, for the food on our tables, for our homes and for our very existence. We ask Lord that you be with the ill, and those who grieve, the homeless, and the poor. May we be your hands and feet here on this earth, in this place as we seek your will. Be with our Pastor, bless him and be with him in all he does, be with his family. Be with our staff and leaders Lord, bless and guide them. Be with our country Lord, may we show kindness and caring for each other and make our world a better place. Thank you, Lord, for those who perform acts of kindness in your name. In the name of Jesus, 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**
If you need assistance, call the church office.

Celebrate Recovery, Thursday, 6:30pm

