



Utica United  
Methodist Church

# Weekly Messenger

March 8, 2024

## IN THIS ISSUE:

UWIF  
GCCM Mission  
Trip  
Devotional  
Back Page  
Info

## "Something to Consider"

This coming Sunday, our scripture passage for the sermon will include one of the most frequently quoted passages of the Bible. Martin Luther is quoted as saying it contains "the gospel in miniature." John 3:16 is beloved, and I hold it dear.

I wonder, how many of us quote the verse without considering the context. Jesus speaks these words to a man who is searching for answers. Nicodemus was taught to find the truth and essence of faith in holding to rules and regulations. Even though Nicodemus was part of the group that resisted Jesus most, he was tired of trying to work out his faith in a list of things he was not permitted to do.

At night, in hopes his fellow Pharisees wouldn't see him, Nicodemus comes to Jesus for answers that he hopes will provide the freedom his life has been missing. Jesus takes the opportunity to explain truths about God that were not taught by those whose power was found in keeping rules.

The next time John 3:16 comes to mind or out of your mouth, consider the context. Consider the God who came to set you free. Consider those you know who need to know the true nature of God.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Don

### United Women in Faith

The United Women in Faith will be meeting in Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, March 13th at noon. We will begin with a potluck luncheon. Please bring a dish to pass, your own place setting and an item for the mini food pantry.

At 1:00 Patsy Clark will explain how Celebrate Recovery can help you, your family or friends.

All women in the church are invited, hope to see you there.

Utica United  
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# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## God's Country Community Ministries

A few weeks ago, we had our missionary, Randy Hildebrant provide an update on the ministry he serves. Randy serves God's Country Community Ministries (GCCM) located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Our church has been invited to join with GCCM on a mission trip to the Upper Peninsula in June of 2024. In the coming weeks Together-In-Mission (TIM) will be soliciting the level of interest from our church in being part of a team participating in a mission trip. The skill levels of the team will determine the type of work that the team performs. Many details are flexible at this time so our main objective is to share the information we have and discuss schedule and work scope with those who may feel a calling to support this ministry. More details and sign-up sheets will be available starting Sunday after service.

This mission trip will provide an opportunity for those who want to be a part of a Christian-based team of disciples and want to use their capabilities to help others in need. In addition to ourselves, the trip will enable us to extend an invitation to our friends, adult children and grandchildren (15 years and older) to accompany us on a spiritual mission. For those who have never participated in a mission trip, here is your chance to enjoy the beautiful Upper Peninsula while allowing your "light to shine" on the children of God served by GCCM. We are looking to get a group of 10 to 15 individuals to join the mission team. Please stop by the table after service to pick up an information packet and let us know of your interest. At this time we will not be looking for a final commitment to the trip, rather we are trying to identify those who may be interested in the trip.

TIM is excited to offer this opportunity to bring glory to God through a mission trip to "God's Country". If you are not able to participate in the mission, but would like to assist with supporting this trip please watch for ways to help as details of the mission trip unfold. We are thankful to God for guiding us to this occasion to use our talents to serve our Father in heaven. May He bless our efforts.

### Together-In-Mission Group





# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## DECISIONS

As we age, we are faced with many decisions. Decisions that we don't want to make. Decisions like "How long can we live alone, When should we stop driving, Are we taking care of ourselves (fixing meals, taking meds, doing laundry, remembering to shower, etc) Being a Nurse I know the signs plus I have been through it with my husband and my Father. My Father was independent but in his early 80's he began to do things that indicated he may need help. He had gone to renew his driver's license in a town that he had lived in since 1941 and could not find the Secretary of State's office. He stopped and asked a Police Officer who gave him directions and when he still couldn't find it, he blamed faulty directions for this, he again stopped and asked a stranger directions. He finally made it to the office and easily renewed his license. He didn't drive far on a daily basis, only going to church on Sunday and to a restaurant in the evenings. When my husband went to pick him up one evening, he had given up driving after dark, my husband noticed his car was gone. He asked my dad where his car was and he told him he had sold it. He had decided to stop driving on his own. He took a taxi every day to his favorite restaurant except those days when we brought him to our house to eat. I began to suggest to him that he consider a Senior Citizen Retirement Community. He was very resistant to that idea. Finally, one day he said he would like to go with me to see some. He was not enthusiastic about this but said yes he would like to see what that was like. We found one we both liked and before he could argue about it, I had made arrangements to move him in. He had a nice apartment, with a screened in porch with an area where he could have a small garden if he wanted to. He was not happy with me when he moved in, but the personnel had told me to leave him alone for two weeks and not visit him but call him on the phone to check on him. When I went to visit with him two weeks later (he was too busy to answer his phone) he was happier than he had been in a long time. He loved it there and was quite busy. He had made friends and was very active. He was the happiest over the next two years that he had been in a long time and stayed there until he became ill, and we had to deal with hospitalizations and then a nursing home until his death. My husband had Alzheimer's and it was difficult to get him to stop driving. Finally, after a lot of discussion and three doctors telling him he couldn't drive, I told him he could keep driving as long as he wanted but I wouldn't ride with him. He realized without me in the car he wouldn't know how to get places and he finally agreed to stop driving. I have quit driving after dark and don't drive unless I have to. I worry that I'll go to the grocery store and end up on the evening news as the elderly lady that tried to go from 27 mile to 26 mile and ended up in Toledo asking why they moved the Kroger Store. But I have told my son that I will stop driving soon and I will adjust. We can order almost anything online now other than dr. appointments and tests which I seem to have a lot of. I know when God blesses us with longevity, we have to use it wisely. He always will find a way for us to continue serving him through church and/or our neighborhoods. That is part of God's plan for our lives. No matter our age we can serve, I can still make a cake, write a devotional, order stuff online for Easter baskets (this week I learned what "fidgets" are) I discovered that if I can't drive I can have stuff delivered to the church for the needs of others, if we have the desire there is always a way.

—Oh Jesus I have promised to serve thee till the end; Be thou forever near me, my Master and my friend. I shall not fear the battle If thou are by my side, nor wander from the pathway If thou wilt be my guide."

By John E. Bode.

Dear Lord, Thank you for this day. Be with us and lead us to do your work here, in this place, no matter where we are, who we are, or how old we are, or how young we are. We ask for your blessings on our Pastor, be with him in all he does. Be with his family, bless them. Be with the sick, the lonely, the hungry, those who are in our midst who seek you. May they see you in our actions, our kindness, our love, our welcoming. Be with our staff and leaders, may we serve each other. May we be the hands and feet of Jesus here in this place, in this time, always in your precious 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**

