



Weekly Messenger

April 26, 2024

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Utica United Methodist Church
8650 Canal Road,
Sterling Heights, MI
(586) 731-7667
www.UticaUMC.org

"May Prayer Focus"

Sometimes, I think God must think that I think too much. But then I hear Him say, "Don't be so redundant. It is okay to think a lot, especially when it is Me you are thinking about!!!"

In Luke 23:39-43, we read five short verses that can teach us much.

"One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.""

I am fascinated by messages that are so short and yet exceedingly moving and inciteful. Two criminals are crucified along with Jesus. They most likely heard all the rumors about the third person who will join them. They probably overheard the Roman guards discussing the trial before Pilate. Then, they see Jesus, clearly having been beaten and tortured. The crucifixion begins, and Jesus does not cry out in pain, but they do. Then one man challenges Jesus. He doesn't ask questions of Jesus; rather, he mocks Jesus. But Jesus does not offer a retort. In fact, I suspect He did not even turn His head and look at the man.

How long of time elapsed before the second criminal spoke? Did he graciously wait a sufficient amount of time to allow Jesus to respond? The second criminal decides now is the time to speak, and his words are enlightening. He states that he is guilty and that Jesus is innocent, and with calmness and reverence, asks Jesus to simply remember him when He gets to heaven. The criminal did not ask to be taken to heaven, or indeed to even save his life. His was an incredibly humble statement, and he made it while experiencing excruciating pain. With a calm that would seem to have only come by being so physically close to Jesus, he asks to be remembered when Jesus comes into His kingdom. Jesus assures him, saying, ".... today you will be with me in paradise."

Can you imagine Jesus's tone of voice while making this pronouncement? Can you imagine the peace Jesus gave the man? And what about the first criminal? What did he ultimately do? Did he finally repent, or did he simply choose to grumble?

Think about what we can learn from these two criminals who were crucified with Jesus. Think about the deeds we have done and the deeds we have left undone. Can we claim, by the quality of our own deeds, to be any better than these criminals?

Oh, Lord Jesus, I humbly admit there are things I've done that I am ashamed of. I also admit that I am guilty of leaving tasks undone. Hear my honest, humble prayer asking that you remember me when you come into your kingdom. Amen.

It turns out some redundancy is a good thing!

Prayer focus for May submitted by Bob MacKool

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Upcoming Events

April

- April 28th – Sugar Cookie Kit Orders Due (Support Mission trip to UP)
- April 28th and May 5th – Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange

May

- May 10th – Used Book Sale 9am–2pm
- May 11th – Used Book Sale 10am–Noon
- May 11th – Plant Swap 10am–Noon
- May 12th – Happy Mother's Day

June

- June 1st – Car Show 9am–3pm
- June 10th – STARS/XCEL begins 9am–2pm
- June 16th – Send off of Mission Trip to the UP

Spring Themed Sugar Cookie Kit

For a limited time we are offering a Spring Themed Sugar Cookie Decorating Kit.

These kits include the following and will be packaged together for pick-up at the church on Sunday, May, 5th:

- 1 dozen spring themed baked sugar cookies
- Buttercream Frosting
- Sprinkles
- Sanding Sugars in a variety of Spring colors

All Sugar Cookie Decorating Kit orders are due no later than April 28th. The cost of each kit is \$20.00 payment collected at time of kit pick-up. Please contact Martha Powers at 586-703-1668 (cell phone) or email at ron_martha@att.net to place your order. There will only be 24 kits available so please don't wait – order today!

Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange

The jigsaw puzzle exchange back in January was a success and we would like to hold another puzzle exchange on April 28th and May 5th. Please bring in your used puzzles and we will set out tables for everyone to browse and pick up some new puzzles to do. You do not have to donate a puzzle to take a puzzle. Puzzles can be brought in anytime during the week between 8am–2pm and left with the office, or can be dropped off under the coat rack on Sunday morning.

BoyScout Flower Sale

Scouts from Troop 80 will be around on Sunday, April 28th with order forms for their Annual Flower Sale. If you are interested in ordering flowers, see one of the scouts. You can also take home a form and bring it back with payment by May 6th and turn it in to the Men's box located in the hallway outside the main office. See Gary Taylor with questions.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Mini Food Pantry Update

We survived our first winter with the Mini Pantry....what a blessing to be able to still meet the needs of those with food insecurities. For the next month we will focus on prepackaged side dishes.

- Au Gratin Potatoes
- Scalloped Potatoes
- Cans of Whole White Potatoes
- Cans of Gravy
- Bags of Dressing
- Condiments
- Fruit Juice (half gallon)

Your continued support has allowed UUMC to ministry to the needs of those families in our neighborhood. In doing so we have been blessed by random cards and notes of encouragement from those who pass by our church.

A friend loves at all times.
Proverbs 17:17

STARS/XCEL Summer Program

We are gearing up for our Summer Camp STARS and XCEL program which runs for 6 weeks starting June 10th - July 18th. Jennifer will be back as our site director. It sounds like 2 of our previous interns will be returning for another summer with us. We do need 2 more interns. If you know of anyone who is 18 years or older and is looking for a summer job, please put them in contact with the church office and we can get them directed to the application process or answer any questions.

Exciting news is our courageous van drivers have agreed to drive again for us this summer and Debbie Pelton has agreed to head up the kitchen. If you are interested in helping with the kitchen this summer, please reach out to Debbie.

Do you have a fun or unique hobby? Do you like to share your hobby with others? We would love to provide our summer campers the opportunity to learn new hobbies and experiences. Some examples have been button/pin collection, coin collections, wooden craft painting, card making, and an introduction to a leader dog. We will have sign up sheets out soon for you to volunteer. It will be helpful when you sign up to indicate which day of the week might work best for you to come in and also whether mornings or afternoons are better for you.

Registration is now open for our campers. You can find a link to the online registration on our website under the Kidzone for STARS and Youth for XCEL or you can scan the QR code below.



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Together In Missions

Each month, T.I.M. will highlight a ministry that Utica UMC is supporting. For the month of April, we will again be highlighting the Methodist Children's Home in Redford. In the past, our support has included Easter Baskets, hygiene products and sporting goods products also Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers.

The following is the opening of their history:

MCHS Family of Services, originally named Methodist Child Care and then Methodist Children's Home Society, was founded in 1917, a year in which Detroit factories were busy turning out war material for the conflict in Europe. When a disastrous epidemic of influenza hit the city, children whose parents died were often left without friends or relatives to care for them. Such was the plight of numerous children discovered by members of the order of deaconesses of the Methodist Church, when making their rounds in the residential sections of Detroit industrial areas.

To hear more about this ministry, join us for a tour of the facility on May 7th. We will be leaving our parking lot at 10 AM and should return around 1pm.

Please sign up on the sheets in the parlor or in the Fellowship Hall so we can be sure we have adequate transportation arranged.

Another way to help continue our longtime support of the 70 children and youth of this ministry is by donating personal hygiene supplies for boys. Items to consider include brush, comb, hair picks, soap, deodorant, razors, shaving cream. Please drop the items in the boxes provided in the narthex or near the back entrance. Items will be delivered during our tour on May 7th.

Used Book Sale

The church will be hosting a community used book sale on Friday, May 10th from 9am-2pm and again on Saturday, May 11th from 10am-Noon. Start cleaning up those book shelves and bring in your used books to donate for the sale. The used book bins will be back out by the entryway at the front door and also by the entryway near Fellowship Hall. If you have a large quantity of books, please e-mail the office at office@uticaumc.org or call the office at 586-731-7667 to let us know how many books you are bringing and if you need help unloading them from your car.

Plant Swap

We will be having a Perennial Plant Swap on Saturday, May 11th from 10am-Noon. Please bring transplants or plant seeds in individual containers and labeled to swap. If you have plant books, please bring them in for the used book sale and we can highlight a table for plant books! This will be a fun event where you can come and swap your plants outside and head inside and purchase some used books. Make sure to tell your friends and neighbors.

United Women In Faith

The United Women in Faith would like to invite all women of our church to attend our meeting on Wednesday, May 8th at noon in Fellowship Hall. We will begin with a potluck luncheon. Bring a dish to share and your own place setting. Drinks are provided. At 1:00 we will have a program with Bob Dewar from Meals on Wheels. Come join us!

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

How Did My Faith Happen

I have often said and felt that I walked into a little Methodist Church and found God waiting for me. I was thinking about that today and I thought about all the Christians that had mentored me. There were first and foremost Pastors. Pastors took the time to talk with me about my faith. The Pastor that encouraged me to service, the Pastor that talked with me about leaving home and going away to school, the Pastor that encouraged me to take on responsibility in the church, the Pastor that told me of his life and struggles, the Pastor that made me a better person, the Pastor that was a Yankee fan but we got along anyway, the Pastor that saw what I needed and sent me on the Walk to Emmaus, the Pastor that listened to me when my husband was sick, the Pastor that made sure I was taken care of when I was sick with visits from church members and the church care that I needed, the Pastor that answers my biblical questions. Now some Pastors are named more than once. One special one is named often. But this morning I began thinking of the lay people who had touched my life. Shirley Flanders was one, she took me with her on rides to Port Huron and talked to me about growing up and dealing with boys and temptations. She did this in a conversational way, not lecturing and I looked forward to our rides to Port Huron. I could ask her questions about a Christ like life, and she would answer me. Her time in my life was an important time and I listened to her talks and made it a part of me. Another great influence was Jane Wright. As Chair of SPRC there were a lot of times I had to be the go between from the people in the congregation to the Pastor. She came to me with an issue one day and I told her I would talk with the pastor and return to her. She said that I didn't have to tell her any "results," that she knew I would take care of it. Her words made me feel so good while carrying out a task that was sometimes very difficult and yet needed to be done. Such a simple thing but she gave me confidence that I could solve the problem and I did. One time I was not serving on any committees and was lost but I went up to Noel Potter and asked if I could usher, he asked when I was available, and I became an Usher. He gave me a place to serve, and I loved ushering. I did the same thing with communion, just asked if I could serve and I loved serving until I developed a familial tremor and threw bread everywhere. So many people have helped me with my faith journey, and I know there are more to come, and I am grateful.

I did not go into a church and find God as I thought I would. I found people who would mentor me, use me, inspire me, and show me how faith works and where God is in the church. He resides in each of us and calls us to be the hands and feet of his son here in this place, in this time.

Lord may we each be touched by your love this day. May we be servants to each other. We ask that you be with those that are ill and those that grieve, may your arms enfold them and comfort them. Help us Lord to serve those who need your comfort and your care. May we be your hands and your feet here in this place and reach out to those who seek you. We thank you for our homes, for our food, for the love in our lives, may we share what we have and who we are with your children. 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 canned
meat, pancake mixes and
syrup, small peanut butter
and jelly, boxes of
crackers.**

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

Announcement Loop/Vertical TVs—

End of day on Tuesday each week
Messenger Articles and Prayer List by

Noon on Wednesday each week.
Announcement made during service

by 1pm Friday

E-mail rachelle@uticaumc.org or
office@uticaumc.org

E-Giving

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

