



Weekly Messenger

September 27, 2024

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"October Prayer Focus"

NO TASK TOO SMALL,

I just celebrated my 76th birthday, and it seems the older I get, the more I marvel at the accomplishments of others and their dedication. I am not envious; instead, I desire to be equally dedicated. This is especially true with volunteering at our church. Every Wednesday, I come into the office to sign bank checks, and most often, I see Todd Sample on the lawn mower, buzzing back and forth and wearing earmuffs. This work ethic brings me joy. Knowing the task must get done and saying, "I will do it, Lord." The same is true when, after serving a meal for STARS kids, I see someone wash down all the tables in Fellowship Hall. I watch this, and it inspires me.

Last year, the Pastor asked me to spray the weeds growing in the cracks of our parking lot with a chemical to kill them. Sure, it's not a high-profile task, and it isn't likely to be written about in the Messenger or get noted on the electronic sign out front, but it needs to get done. So, I did it and continue to do it.

Thank you, Lord. I know signing the church bank checks is an important task, but I enjoy killing those weeds. In fact, when I walk into church on Sunday, I make sure I do a slight walk around to see if the weeds sprayed on Wednesday are dead.

I pray that you, too, will find great joy in volunteering for both the little tasks and the big ones. In fact, take a trip around the parking lot on Sunday and let me know where I missed the weeds.

Robert MacKool

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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Upcoming Events

October

- October 12th - Road Rally
- October 26th - Trunk or Treat/Spooktacular Halloweeny Boo Bash

Road Rally/Scavenger Hunt

We will be having a Scavenger Hunt and Road Rally on Saturday, October 12th at 2pm. Save the date, invite your friends and join us for fun, fellowship and food! Follow the clues, explore our local area, search for items and have a blast. Once you have safely made it back to church, we will be having pizza, salad and dessert. Sign up sheets will begin on September 8th. There will be a \$5 entrance fee per person paid on the day of the event. Sign up by October 6th.

Spooktacular Halloweeny Boo Bash Trunk or Treat

You are invited to join us on Saturday, October 26th from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm for the Spooktacular Halloweeny Boo Bash to be held in our very own Parking Lot.

Trunk or Treat will be the highlight of the event however we have lots more coming your way.

Trick or Treat Bags will be provided for each child attending. A special Thank You to Peggy Miller for taking on this task as well as ordering additional gifts for a special Treasure Hunt during the event.

A "Craft Station" lead by Gary Taylor is on the agenda.

Bob and Patsy Clark will lead the Welcoming Committee with Cider and Donuts for all our guests.

Debbie Pelton is taking charge once again in the "witches kitchen" with some ghoulishly delicious treats for all the goblins.

Heather Sample will be stirring up some wonderful potions in the Popcorn and Cotton Candy Spook House.

A Photo Station will be in place for Family Photo Ops throughout the afternoon.

Kathy Borlas is offering her creative talents in the Field of Games.

Liza and Jim Young will provide some wonderful Monster Mash Music for the event.

The team has been organized and is in place. Plans will continue to evolve over the next month.

We will be in need of many volunteers to make this year's Trunk or Treat a successful event in which we minister to our neighboring families and show the Love of Christ to all in attendance.

Please reach out to the folks taking the lead on specific tasks for the event. They will need your help and your willingness to volunteer will make everyone's job lighter.

There will be a Mass Mailing in early October. Please offer your services to Mary Dolenga.

In the event of inclement weather we will need to shift our plans to an indoor event. This will require many folks for set up on Friday and tear down Saturday afternoon.

Please accept this as your "official invitation" to join me and those who have already committed to leading a specific task/job.

Sign up sheets for "Trunks" participation in the event will be available on Sunday, October 6th for both services. Please contact Martha Powers with questions at (586)703-1668

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

MAKING A JOYFUL NOISE TO THE LORD

This is the last Sunday that we are trying to raise \$10,000 for the Pipe Organ Fund. As of Sunday, September 22nd we have raised \$8,560! We need just \$1,440 more to reach our goal. The poster on display by the church office shows our progress. We are marking the keys on the 3 keyboards and pedal keyboard displayed, as if we were playing a glissando. A glissando is the musical term for when you rapidly slide one or more fingers over the keys gliding from one note to the next. Won't that be a joyful noise when all the keys have been played (filled).

Late last year, the organ fell silent because a power surge caused the "switching system" to fail. This control system and a number of other things which also failed have been repaired. These repairs cost about \$5,000. There are also several additional things to be repaired which have been discovered so we are trying to raise an additional \$5,000 (\$10,000 total). Things which need to be repaired/updated include:

- Repair/replace one of two cracked wooden windchests which hold the festival trumpet pipes
- Re-leather the sub-base 16" pipe rank (44 wooden pipes). The leather on each pipe is placed around the tuning stopper and enables the pipe to be tuned and to stay in tune. It dries out over time and no longer stays in place, causing the pipe to go out of tune.
- Replace the electronic cards in the combination action system which allows the organist to preset different groups of stops.

Gifts of any amount will be appreciated. Please designate "Organ Fund" on your offering. All contributions will be comingled in the Pipe Organ Fund to be used for any project or update.

With your help, we will be able to continue making joyful noise to the Lord and worship the Lord with gladness for years to come.

Psalm 100:1-2: "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing." (NRVA)

United Women In Faith

All women are invited to attend the United Women in Faith meeting on Wednesday, October 9th in Fellowship Hall. The potluck luncheon will begin at noon. Bring a dish to share with others and your own place setting. Drinks will be provided.

At 1:00pm Terry Gibbons, a physical therapist, will be sharing exercises to strengthen our Core Body functions. Wear comfortable clothing to be able to participate in some of these exercises which you can do at home. Call Kathy Weaver if you have any questions (260-5953).

Red Cross Blood Drive

There will be a red cross blood drive here at the church on Tuesday, October 15th from 11:00am-5:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. To schedule an appointment, please visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter sponsor code: UTICAUMC or call 1-800-Red Cross (1-800-733-2767).

See the flyer in the narthex or on the welcome table in Fellowship Hall for more information.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

"The Call - Bible Study

The Call Bible Study will begin on Tuesday, October 1st thru November 5th. We will meet in the Conference Room from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. The Call book is available for purchase through amazon. Please contact Martha Powers with questions, cell #586-703-1668.

UPDATES from the MINI PANTRY

The Mini Pantry is in need of:


Canned fruit and canned vegetables.

Pasta and cans of spaghetti sauce.

Boxes of scalloped potatoes, mashed potatoes, hamburger helper

Thank you for your continued support.

We continue to be blessed by the congregational support and continue to bless our community.

With Grateful ,

The Mini Pantry Crew

Teddy Bear Ministry

Teddy Bears have once again made an appearance in the Sanctuary. The Teddy Bear ministry was started as a way to share prayers and love for someone in need. The idea is the bears are loved on and prayed over and then can be taken to someone in the hospital, to someone homebound or sick, to someone maybe having some mental health problems as a way to remind them that they are loved, they have been prayed for and continue to be prayed for, and can be with them when maybe a person cannot. If you see a teddy bear in the sanctuary, feel free to love on it and say a prayer over it. If you know of someone who could really use a bear, please pick one up and take it with you.

New Phone Directories

I have no explanation for what happened to getting new directories this past year. I have taken it upon myself to create and print church directories here in the church. They are available to pick up and take home. I found some discrepancies in my records and also found for some of our newer members and constituents, I may not have had a phone number. Please contact the church office by phone or e-mail at office@uticaumc.org if there is any changes or updates to your contact information.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

THERE'S STILL MORE TO DO – YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

Together we have done wonderful things to financially support our ministries through the first 3 quarters of 2024. We raised \$7,300 for the Adult Mission Trip; \$2,545 for our missionaries and mission projects (so far); \$5,900 for STARS/XCEL; \$8,700 for the Pipe Organ Fund (so far); \$2,700 for MCREST, Warming Center, and the Oil Change Ministry; \$9,735 for Brighter Future; and we have received over \$250,000 for the Operating Fund which provides the foundation for everything.

But there is still a lot more to do. Between now and the end of the year we will have special giving opportunities for Love Loaves and Christmas (for mission projects) and we will also have a year-end emphasis on conference ministry shares and our Operating Fund expenses (staff compensation, utilities, insurance, etc.). It is vital for all of us to continue faithfully giving to the Operating Fund to ensure we meet all of our obligations this year. Giving is slightly below our giving levels last year, but our budget and expenses have remained about the same. Through the first 3 quarters we have been able to keep pace with most of our expenses. However, we have fallen behind in our conference obligations (ministry shares).

Currently we are operating “week-to-week” with expenses being paid as income is received. Your on-going regular gifts for the Operating Fund are appreciated. They are essential to ensure we are able to meet our required expenses each week. If it is possible for you to give extra, it will help enable us to meet our obligations.

We are able to receive contributions in the form of cash, checks, stocks/bonds/mutual funds, etc. Please make checks payable to Utica United Methodist Church or Utica UMC. If you use offering envelopes on Sunday morning, it isn't necessary to seal them or tape them shut. Simply fold the envelope flap over. It makes it easier for the individuals who count the offering if they aren't sealed shut. Please make sure your offering envelopes are secured if you are mailing them to the church. We also have E-Giving available for your convenience. Finally, if you are planning to make a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA for 2024 or a year-end gift of stocks/bonds/mutual funds, please consider doing this soon so it will be processed before the end of the year.

Tuesday will be the 1st of October marking the beginning of the 4th quarter. And there are only 92 days until the end of the year! There's still a lot more to do – your continued faithful giving and support are needed and appreciated.

“Excel in the Grace of Giving”

On Sundays, October 13, October 20, and October 27, our worship theme will be “Excel in the Grace of Giving.” I hope you will make every effort to be present on all three Sundays. During the second Sunday, we will introduce a giving challenge titled “Give Plus One.”

As your pastor, I hope and pray that the messages offered will help us in our journeys as faithful and generous stewards. By the power of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament, we are molded and transformed into stewards who follow God's ways and become more Christ-like in our giving. As Christians, we are motivated to give by the gift of God's grace, shown to us by the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. With hearts filled with God's love and grace, we can give faithfully.

Giving is our faithful response to God's gifts. God wants us to give willingly and cheerfully out of hearts filled with love and gratitude for our present and eternal lives. We also give out of obedience because God's Word directs us to give. The Apostle Paul said, *“But just as you excel in everything ... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us ... see that you also excel in this grace of giving”* (2 Corinthians 8:7). Just as Paul urged the people in Corinth to give, we are urged to *“excel in this grace of giving.”*

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Don

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

STUMBLING STONES

Romans 9:30–33 What then shall we say? That the gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, a righteousness that is by faith, but Israel who pursued a law of righteousness has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone. As it is written: See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

I recall a Pastor telling me “He just would not leave me alone.” Every time he tried to go a different way; a stumbling stone was in his path. He followed the path he felt God was leading him to and his way became clear to him. I have often asked Pastors about their path to the ministry, and it has never been a completely easy path but a path that strengthened their resolve and a path they became more committed and called to. John Wesley was at a prayer meeting when he “felt his heart strangely warmed.” This was not the end of his journey but the beginning as he knew without doubt that he was saved, not by works, but by God’s grace and love. Prior to that he was a soul still searching.

I have had many “stumbling stones” but God has used them to take me to him. Many times, there were events and problems that would have drawn me away from God, but he has used them to draw me closer. Poverty was hard to overcome but jobs that gave me money to save led me to a job that was fulfilling and worthwhile. I loved being a Nurse.

Lord, thank you for the path you set me on and the teachers, mentors and pastors who held me to the path.

Lord, we thank you for this day and may we be worthy of the gift of each day we are given. Be with us. We ask that you be with those that are grieving and those who are ill. Be with those who seek you in our midst, may they find you waiting. May we be the hands and feet of Jesus in this place and in this time. Be with our Pastor and bless his ministry to us. Be with his family, grant them peace and health. May we be the hands and feet of Jesus the Christ here, in this time and in this place. Be with our country Lord, we are a land in turmoil and confusion, give us peace and clarity. Be with our staff and leaders, grant them health and safety. May those who enter our doors as strangers find a haven and you in our midst. Help us Lord where we have “stumbling stones” in our path. 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



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

