



Weekly Messenger

November 15, 2024

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"Getting Ready for Our Next Chapter"

Many of you have heard that Laura and I will retire next June. My official retirement date will be July 1, 2025. Our last Sunday here at Utica will be June 8, 2025. I chose to have it announced in November so that the Utica church would be considered at the beginning of the Cabinet's work to appoint pastors for 2025.

There is much work to do between now and next June, and I am as committed as ever to getting that work done. I aim to do all I can to set up the church and the next pastor for success. Don't consider me to be a "short-timer" just yet!

Some will rightly ask why my last Sunday is much earlier than my official retirement. The retiring pastors are encouraged to vacate the parsonage early to facilitate any work needed to prepare the house for the next pastor and not slow the moves that will happen in the string of moves necessary for all of the clergy this coming June. Some will remember that our move to Utica was delayed, making a real crunch for the pastor who followed me at my previous appointment. We are trying to make the transition to the next pastor easy.

The DS will be working with the Pastor Parish Relations Committee in the coming months to ensure he has a good grasp on the needs of the Utica church. From there, he will represent the church's needs at Cabinet meetings to find the best pastor to serve as your next pastor. Your new pastor is expected to begin serving the church on July 1st and preach their first sermon on the 6th of July. I am holding the process in prayer and invite you to do the same.

While it has been an honor to serve as your pastor, I know it is time for me to close out my time with you. Our grandchildren are at an age when they want us in their lives, and we sincerely wish for that blessing, too. We've begun sorting things to get ready to move. We don't know all of what awaits us in our next chapter, but we will continue to follow God's calling on our lives.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Don

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Methodist Church
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Sterling Heights, MI
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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Thanksgiving Dinner at the Baldwin Center

Once again, the Utica United Methodist Church will be donating pies for the Thanksgiving Dinners served to the clientele by volunteers at the Pontiac Baldwin Center. Our church has provided pies for many years now, but we have lost track of exactly when this tradition began. If you know when our church began this annual Thanksgiving tradition, please contact the church office to share.

Fresh fruit and pumpkin pies for Thanksgiving dessert is a wonderful blessing to cap off a turkey dinner with all the fixings. If you would like to support this ministry, please bring your donations to the church on Sunday morning, November 24th for delivery in the afternoon. This year again, pie donations are requested to be "store bought" pies and not homemade pies. Cream pies should not be donated due to the need for refrigeration.

Last year we also collected men's winter coats for donation to the Baldwin Clothes Closet. This year we were asked to provide "snack items" to be included in bag lunches served to the guests. Snack items can include any small packaged goodie such as a pack of cookies or donuts, peanuts or cashews, granola bars, cheese & crackers, trail mix, chips, etc. Please provide only individually packaged items (i.e. no bulk packages). Also they are looking for children's gloves will also accept hats and scarves please drop off in snack container. All items will be taken to Baldwin Center on Sunday, November 24th. Contact Debbie Foskett at 248-894-7547 with any questions.

CHRISTMAS TEA

Saturday, December 7th - 2:00pm
Fellowship Hall



Please join us for tea, desserts, music, and fellowship.
All ladies are welcome - please invite your friends and family for this special Christmas event. Ages 10 and older only please.

There will be a sign-up sheet beginning Sunday, November 10th to RSVP with your attendance and also if you are interested in hosting a table or providing a dessert.

We hope you will join us!

We will also have a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in helping with set up and clean up.

In lieu of an entry fee, please bring a food item for the UUMC Mini Pantry
(Be sure to check the latest list posted in the Weekly Messenger)

* * THANK YOU * *



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

UPDATES from the MINI PANTRY

As the cooler weather approaches we are in need of the following items for our Mini Pantry:

Soup
Boxes of Potatoes (any kind)
Cans of Gravy
Boxes of Stove Top Stuffing
Cereal
Pancake Mix and Syrup
Small Jars of Peanut Butter and Jelly

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Your generous heart is evident week after week. The "Wagon of Hope" continues to be filled with necessary food items and in return the Mini Pantry continues to be restocked Sunday - Friday.

With Grateful Hearts

The Mini Pantry Crew.

Quilted Items - Fund Raiser in November

Beginning November 3rd before and after worship Debbie Foskett and Martha Powers will be selling quilted items as a Fund Raiser for our 2024 Church Apportionments. This project showcases how God uses each of us by sharing the gifts and talents we have been blessed with to further His kingdom.

We hope that you will find an item for yourself or for that "special someone" in your life. 100% of the monies collected from the sale of these items will go towards our apportionments.

Advent Study - Tuesday Mornings

We will begin our Advent Study on Tuesday, November 19th, 11:30am to 1pm. "An Unlikely Advent" Extraordinary People of the Christmas Story by Rachel Billups, focuses on the extraordinary people of the Christmas Story. Books can be purchased on Amazon. If you don't have a PRIME account please reach out to me today and I will order your book. Hoping and praying you will join us as we once again prepare for the Birth of Jesus Christ. Martha Powers 586-703-1668.

Remembrance Angel Ornament Sale

We will once again be having an ornament sale in honor or memory of a loved one starting this Sunday, November 17th until December 22nd or we sell out. Ornaments are sold for \$15 each or 2 for \$25. Order forms will be available at a table in the Narthex along with an example of the ornament. They will be on display in the Narthex or in the back entry way by Fellowship Hall on one of the Angel Trees and can be taken home after service on December 22nd or after the Christmas Eve Service. If you do not want the ornament on the tree, they can be taken home same day as your purchase. All proceeds will go toward our end of year financial obligations.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

FOR GOD'S GLORY

We do many things for God's glory. Helping those in need, telling others about God's grace, and worshipping God are a few ways we glorify God. But, have you ever considered how giving your tithes and offerings to the Utica UMC Operating Fund is also for God's glory?

As we approach the end of the year, it becomes easier to identify our remaining financial needs. This year, we have about \$95,000 in remaining expenses at this time. This includes: compensation (\$30,000), utilities and upkeep (\$37,000), conference pensions and ministry shares (\$15,500), and ministries/administration (\$12,500).

The Operating Fund is the foundation for all the things we do. By ensuring we meet these financial needs, we glorify God by enabling Utica UMC to serve where God calls us to serve.

While this may seem like a large amount, we have done this before. Together and with God's help, we can satisfy these obligations by year end. The phrase "For God's Glory" has 12 letters in it. We will fill these letters in over the next 8 weeks to show our progress (each letter representing \$8,000).

We are able to receive contributions in the form of cash, checks, stocks/bonds/mutual funds, etc. We also have e-Giving available for your convenience. If you would like to make a year-end gift of stocks/bonds/mutual funds or a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA for 2024, please consider doing this soon so it will be processed before the end of the year.

Gifts need to be received by noon on December 31 to be included in your 2024 giving statement. However, to enable us to meet our obligations to others before the end of the year, we will appreciate your gifts by December 22, if possible. Gifts received the week of December 29 will also enable us to meet expenses (e.g., payroll) we have in the first few weeks of the new year. Thank you.

Upcoming Events

- November 17th - December 22nd - Angel Tree Ornaments For Sale
- December 7th - Christmas Tea
- December 8th - The Gosbells Christmas Concert - A Christmas Festival 2024
- December 21st & 22nd - Cookie Walk
- December 24th - Christmas Eve Services 11am and 8pm

Office Closure for Thanksgiving

The office will be closed on Thursday, November 28th and Friday, November 29th for Thanksgiving. Due to the holiday schedule the deadline for the Prayer list for December 1st and the Messenger for November 29th will be Tuesday, November 26th at noon. Anything received after noon on the 26th will be included the following week.

Gently Used Small Devotional Books - Needed

Haven Place is seeking gently used small devotional books. Haven Place is a non-profit organization located in New Haven, Michigan. Please see Martha Powers with any questions, she will also collect these items and deliver to Haven Place.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren

Today my Granddaughter sent me a picture of my two great grandchildren in Colorado sitting on the floor each writing me a letter. This made me so happy. I have written to them on occasion, and it has brought me so much joy to do so, but now they are writing to me. I have always loved writing and to see them writing back is making my day. At one point in my life, I wrote a lot of poetry. I enjoyed it and it was a way to express my feelings at that point in my life. I realized later that my children would be reading that some day when I was gone and so I tore it up and burned it. I did not want my final words to them to be as troubled as I was at that point in my life. I want them to remember me as the loving mother who could handle anything not as a woman unhappy and filled with regrets and sorrow. We all go through the hills and valleys of a lifetime. In those times I have learned to turn to God. He is there waiting to take our burdens and renew us, to give us strength. I still write when I am sad only now, I take it to God also. There is something about my writing it down and then getting rid of it that helps me. Through writing I can clarify it and then give it to God. It helped when my husband had Alzheimer's. I could express my frustrations and problems on paper and then toss it when I felt better.

When we were in Israel we went to the "Wailing Wall" in Jerusalem. It is the last wall of the temple. It is said that you can write your prayers down on a piece of paper, place it in the crevices of the wall and leave it there. God will receive it and know your prayer. We can take our sorrows and joys to the foot of the cross and they will be gone from us. Our mortal problem (at least for some of us) is that we pick them up again. We need to give them to God and leave them. To trust in a God that answers our prayers. Sometimes we don't like the answer, but God will help us through our problems. He is listening. I need to tend to my prayer life better and to remember to say thank you to a loving God that has seen me through so much. At 89 I can truly say that my joys and God's loving care have far exceeded my sorrows. I still have notes from my grandchildren, one complaining that I had put a snake in their beds (plastic and very fake) and they were planning revenge. They were getting ready for bed and Grandma was playing with them. The three of them were and still are my joy. I have been blessed to have them close to me when they were younger and then as they moved, we took trips but managed to see them monthly. Our grandson is always close by and my go to person for computer problems. Although my grandson in law in Colorado does phone consultations. One granddaughter is in Illinois with one great grandson, the other is currently in Colorado but moving soon to Florida. The joy they and their parents have brought to my life is immeasurable. I am blessed.

We thank you Lord for this day and for the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren you bring into our lives. You bless us so much with the gift of babies however they come to us. Be with them, watch over them and keep them safe. Be with our church, may it be your church and may those who come seeking you find you in our services, in each of us and in our pews. Be with our Pastor and his family. Bless them and keep them safe. Be with our leaders and staff bless their work. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

23rd Psalm the Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul.

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

