



# Weekly Messenger

November 29, 2024

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## "Expect the Unexpected"

Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign:  
See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.  
Isaiah 7:14

As Advent begins, we anticipate once again the Birth of our Lord and Savior. Let us do so with the conviction and promise to "**Expect the Unexpected**" as only God can do.

The stable symbolizes **HOPE** and the promise of a Savior who will come to redeem a broken world.

**PEACE** comes to us in the simple and humble surroundings in which our Savior was born. We are called to be peacemakers for the sake of Jesus Christ.

**JOY** is witnessed by the Shepherds as the Angel appeared to them proclaiming the Good News of Jesus' birth.

**LOVE**... Love came down at Christmas in the form of a tiny child. He would soon bear the sins of the world but on that night he was worshipped and adored by all who came to Bethlehem.

**LIGHT**...a radiant beam that shines brightly from the tiny stable in which God has promised and fulfilled the delivering of a King.

Most Gracious and Heavenly Father,  
We come before you with a humble spirit asking you to still our whole being so that we can openly accept the **Gifts of Christmas** this year. Let us remember the words you spoke to the shepherds..."fear not...do not be afraid", as we live to serve you with every fiber of our being. Let us fix our eyes upon you O Lord, the author and perfecter of our faith. Transform our world into a world that lives with **Hope** in our hearts, **Peace** in our lives, **Joy** in living, **Love** for our neighbor and most importantly.... let us be the **Light of The World** illuminating in the darkness. In this we ask and pray in the Name of Jesus!  
AMEN

Faith Step: As you enter into each week throughout the Advent Season look for the Gifts of Christmas in your everyday activities.

Martha Powers

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# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## 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



**Starting Sunday, December 1st we will begin our Advent Series "Prepare"**

**Come and find out if you are prepared for the birth of our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.**

## *A Christmas Festival*

**2024 Handbell and Pipe Organ Christmas Concert  
Featuring: The Gosbells Handbell Choir**

**Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 3pm**

**Utica United Methodist Church  
8650 Canal Road  
Sterling Heights, MI 48314**



Presented by: The Music Ministry of Utica United Methodist Church

**\*\*Concert Admission is Free\*\***

An afterglow of light refreshments will be enjoyed by all at the conclusion of the concert!

## CHRISTMAS TEA

Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> - 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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**

## **FOR GOD'S GLORY**

Our financial gifts for the Utica UMC Operating Fund are made for God's glory. By ensuring we meet our annual financial needs, we glorify God by enabling Utica UMC to serve where God calls us to serve.

We are using the letters "For God's Glory" to see the progress we make toward meeting our year-end expenses. Our progress is directly dependent on the contributions we receive each week. Between now and the end of the year we have about \$74,000 remaining in Operating Fund expenses – \$22,000 less than we had November 1. Three of the letters in this phrase are now green to reflect this.

The remaining \$74,000 includes: compensation (\$17,950), utilities and upkeep (\$29,765), conference pensions and ministry shares (\$15,500), and ministries/administration (\$10,785). Together and with God's help, we can satisfy these obligations by year end.

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.

### **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.

### **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

The Mini Pantry Crew.

### **Remembrance Angel Ornament Sale**

We will once again be having an ornament sale in honor or memory of a loved one. 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



## CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK December 21 & 22

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! And, it's nearly time for our Annual Christmas Walk. This means it's time begin thinking about your favorite cookies and treats – both the ones you will bake and the ones you will eat!

The Cookie Walk will be open for the community and congregation on Saturday, December 21 (10 AM – Noon) and for the congregation on Sunday, December 22 (after services). Free will donations will be appreciated. All donations will be used for the many ministries and projects we provide and support.

**BAKERS** – Sign-up sheets will be available beginning Sunday, December 1 for you to indicate how many cookies you will donate. Your cookies can be dropped off Tuesday, 12/17 thru Friday 12/20 during regular office hours (8 AM – 2 PM). Because the sale is open to the community on Saturday, it is important for your cookies to be dropped-off by Friday, December 20.

**SPREAD THE WORD** – Please tell your friends and family to come to the Cookie Walk Saturday, December 21 from 10 AM – Noon or Sunday, December 22 after services. If you are a Face Book user, please "Like" our Cookie Walk event or better yet "Invite" your friends and family. Printed flyers are also available at church for you to take and share with others.

**COOKIE EATERS** – Come fill a container (or two or three) with a variety of delicious cookies – some for yourself and some for your friends and family. Free will donations will be appreciated.

## Prayer List Update

Did you know that we have a prayer team called the "Wall Watchers," who have committed to praying everyday for the people on both the published prayer list and for those who don't wish to have their prayers on the prayer list? Marg Mowers heads up this prayer team and does her best to contact those on the prayer list to keep updated on the needs of those listed. Please make sure to reach out to her or to the office to update us on the people you have on the prayer list.

The published prayer list was meant to be a temporary list, for those with urgent prayer needs, with the goal of removing them after 3 months. Unfortunately, here in the office, I have lost track of who went on the prayer list and when, it also just rolled over from the previous year. So, it has been decided that the prayer list is going to start over in January 2025.

Please contact the office if you currently have someone on the prayer list that you would like to keep on the prayer list starting in January. The prayer team and their list will continue on and those people will continued to be prayed over daily even if they are no longer on the published prayer list.

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Why the Nativity?



The timeless message of Why the Nativity? changes lives! An inspiring journey surrounding the most pivotal moment in human history....the birth of Jesus Christ.

Drawing from both the Old and New Testaments, noted pastor, author, and theologian Dr. David Jeremiah provides answers to the most thought-provoking questions surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ.

Join us on December 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM in Room 305 for the Saturday Afternoon Movie Matinee.

If you plan to attend, let Bob or Patsy Clark know. We don't want to run out of popcorn.

Sign-up sheets are available.

## United Women In Faith

All women are invited to the UWIF meeting on Wednesday, December 11th in Fellowship Hall. We begin with a Potluck Luncheon at noon. Bring a dish to share and your own place setting. Drinks provided.

At 1:00pm Kathy Wojcik will talk to us about Samaritan House in Washington.



# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## The Joys of a Lifetime

I have been focusing on my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and the joy they bring to my life. There are some others. My nieces and nephews. They come and visit me, keep contact with me, check on me and are a joy to me. My oldest niece meets me in Frankenmuth for chicken dinner for my birthday. This started because I had related to her that my husband when he was in the beginning stages of dementia and Alzheimer's could be very stubborn. Usually, he was pretty easy going but sometimes that little spark of stubbornness would come out. One year we were going to Frankenmuth for my birthday. I had told him it was my birthday, and I wanted Chicken and all the side dishes in Frankenmuth. As we drove up 75, he spotted a Cracker Barrel. Now he loved Cracker Barrel, but I explained to him that it was my birthday, and I got to pick and, on his birthday, we had gone to Cracker Barrel. He seemed okay and did not argue any more. However, when we were seated in The Bavarian Inn in Frankenmuth, I ordered the Chicken and he instead of ordering the chicken also, ordered a Roast Beef Sandwich. This meant that I could not get the sides which I love. I went ahead and ordered the sides individually which adds considerable cost to the meal. I was a little "put off" by this but tried to remember it was my birthday and I was sure he didn't mean it in a stubborn way and tried to remember he was not aware of what he had done. I related this story to my niece and every year since then we have met in Frankenmuth for my birthday and at other times just because we enjoy each other. When she was a toddler, she would imitate me by watching me. She would walk like me and stand like I did and watch my reactions. She was a delight then and still is. Now we have expanded that dinner to include an overnight stay at a quaint hotel by the river and additional goodies at the hotel. Next year we plan on expanding it further with shopping and a ride on the Riverboat.

My other nieces and nephews keep in contact with visits when they are on their way from Illinois to Bad Axe and with text messages. As some of you know one of my nieces passed away with cancer. A few weeks ago, I was cleaning out my texts and there was one from her. I could not bear to erase that message as she told me about her faith in a wonderful God. I had helped her on her journey and that message means the world to me. I received a beautiful inspiring message today from my nephew who lives in Illinois. He comforted me and eased my mind as we deal with the division in our country. Division that breaks my heart. He knew the words that would comfort me. Last week I shared text messages with my niece in Saginaw. 6 of my nieces and nephews lost their mother at a young age. She was 50. My heart breaks for them as we share stories about her. She was a good Mother and always loved her babies. There was a young girl in church years ago that would stand alone. Her hair had different colors in it every week. Her parents were getting a divorce. I went up to her and talked with her about her hair and how she did it. I could feel her pain, as we talked. We became friends and about a year ago we ran into each other in a restaurant, and we hugged, and she is such a beautiful person. Successful in her career and life.

People touch our lives. I think God planned for that. My friends, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and nieces and nephews plus the children who are not related bring me joy.

Grace Epperson

### **Saturday Youth Cooking Class**

We have a youth cooking class that happens on the Second Saturday of each month at 9am in the Kitchen/Fellowship Hall. There will be no cooking class in December. The cooking class will resume their schedule on January 11th. This is for youth from 6th grade up to 12th grade. Please speak with Peggy Miller if you have any questions.

# 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](http://www.uticaumc.org)**  
If you need assistance, call the church office.

**Celebrate Recovery, Thursday, 6:30pm**

