



# Weekly Messenger

December 20, 2024

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Last Messenger

Prayer List

Mini Pantry

End of Year Giving

Angel Ornaments

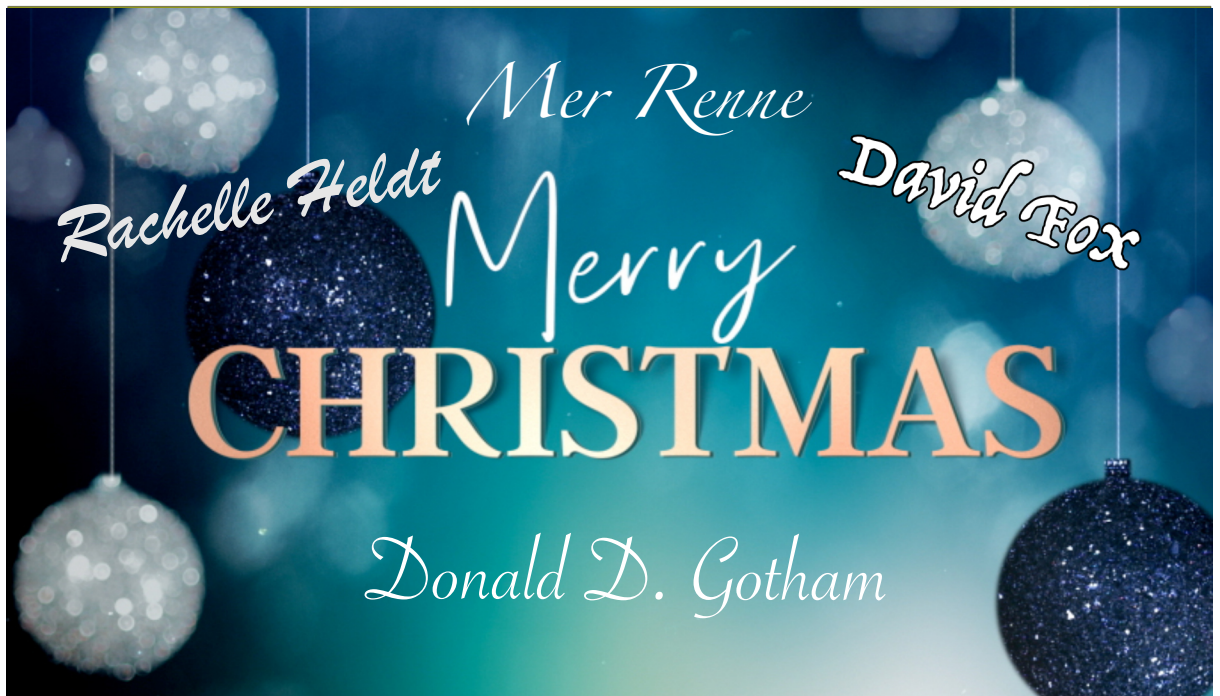
Celebrate Recovery

Christmas Eve

December 29

Devotional

Back Page



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# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Upcoming Events

- December 15th - Angel Tree Ornament Sale
- December 21st and 22nd - Cookie Walk
- December 24th - Christmas Eve Service 11am and 8pm
- December 29th - 1 service at 9:30am followed by a meal

## December Messenger/Mailing

Due to the Christmas Holiday, this will be the last December mailing that you will receive. A mailing will go out December 31st and depending on holiday mail delivery you may or may not receive it by Friday, January 3rd. That will be the first mailing in 2025. You will be receiving this messenger and two home touch papers for Sunday, December 22nd and Sunday, December 29th. You will also receive a prayer list for the week of December 22nd. I hope you have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## Christmas Eve

Join us on Christmas Eve at 11am in Fellowship Hall for a family fun service where an impromptu Christmas pageant will occur. Or, join us at 8pm in the Sanctuary for an evening of bells, carols, candlelight and communion. At long last the Christ child shall come! Are you prepared?



## Sunday December 29th

On Sunday, December 29th we will be having 1 church service at 9:30 am in the Sanctuary followed by a meal and time of fellowship after service down in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited to attend both the service and the meal. There will not be a second service on that Sunday.

# **THE WEEKLY MESSENGER**

## **FOR GOD'S GLORY**

There are about 10 days left in 2024 and we only have about \$10,000 remaining in Operating Fund expenses for the year. We have made great progress since the beginning of November. Only the "Y" in the title of this article remains to be changed to green, signifying we have met our expenses for 2024. Thank you for your faithful stewardship. Truly your gifts have been given FOR GOD'S GLORY.

We are also grateful for our staff and committees who sought ways to minimize expenses throughout the year and especially in the last two months. And, we are grateful our utilities and property upkeep expenses were less than originally projected. All of this has contributed to only having \$10,000 remaining in expenses at this point. These expenses include: \$5,000 for Ministry Shares; \$2,100 for compensation; \$1,200 for property upkeep; and \$1,700 for ministries & administration.

To be included on your 2024 giving statement, gifts need to be received by noon on December 31. 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 the expenses (e.g., payroll) we will have in the first few weeks of the new year.

When Paul wrote to the Philippians thanking them for their gifts, he also shared "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19). May you also experience this blessing. When we do things FOR GOD'S GLORY, He rewards us in return. Thank you.

### **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 Ornaments**

If you purchased an ornament in honor or in memory of someone, they are available to pick up and take home after service on Sunday, December 22nd or after either Christmas Eve service on December 24th. We have small boxes and wrapping paper to use to safely transport your ornament.

There are still some ornaments available to purchase during the cookie walk if you are interested in an ornament.

### **Offering Envelopes/Altar Flowers**

If you have not picked up your offering envelopes for 2025 please check outside the sanctuary and pick them up. If you have not received envelopes and would like them, please contact the office.

Altar Flower cards are available to fill out for next year. Price has increased to \$25 per vase. Please fill out the card and return it to the basket. Payment is not required until time of flowers.

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## IS CELEBRATE RECOVERY FOR ME?

You may be thinking that recovery is only for those with alcohol or drug problems. This could not be further from the truth. Celebrate Recovery mentions "recovery from life's hurts, hang-ups and habits." But what does this mean? A hurt, habit or hang-up is something in you or your life that hinders your walk with God and others. **THESE LIFE PROBLEMS CAN BE STUMBLING BLOCKS OR STEPPING STONES!**

**Hurt:** to experience physical pain caused by yourself or another; to feel emotional pain; undergo or experience difficulties or setbacks. The feeling of being hurt is an emotional reaction to another person's behavior or to a disturbing situation - (e.g., abuse, abandonment, codependency, divorce, relationship issues, etc.)

**Habit:** regular repeated behavior pattern. An action or pattern of behavior that is repeated so often that it becomes typical of somebody, although he or she may be unaware of it. Addiction, such as an addiction to a drug, food or some other stimuli that deadens one's feelings. A habit is an addiction to someone or something (e.g., alcohol dependency, drugs, food, gambling, sex, shopping, smoking, etc.).

**Hang-up:** a psychological or emotional problem or fixation about something. An issue that causes persistent impediment or source of delay. Hang-ups are negative mental attitudes that are used to cope with people or adversity (e.g., anger, depression, fear, unforgiveness, etc.)

Healing and growth are possible by applying the principles of Celebrate Recovery to your life!

Join us each Thursday evening at 6:30 PM in Fellowship Hall. Don't assume that where you were, or where you are, is as good as it gets. *The struggle you're in today is developing the strength you need tomorrow.*

### 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 continue to be prayed over daily even if they are no longer on the published prayer list.

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Best Christmas Ever

I was thinking about my best Christmas ever. I thought of the one when my brother Bill had turned 16 on December 12th. He quit school that day and got a job delivering telegrams in Royal Oak and Vicinity on a Bicycle in the dead of Winter in Michigan. I doubt he had a decent coat; I know I didn't, and he never did either. I had been told there would be no Christmas that year because my father was not working. I was prepared for that. When I woke up Christmas morning there was a stack of presents for me. My brother had quit school, got a job and bought me Christmas. I knew he loved me, but I didn't realize how much he loved me. The other day I was putting the doll bed my grandfather made for me when I was 6 or 7 years old back together (there are no nails in the bed and the dowel rods are wearing out) and in the bed I keep some memories. There was the dog Bill had bought me when he came home on furlough two years later, 1947. I treasure that gift it was the last gift he would give me. He would pass away in June of that year. My heart broke at the loss of that big brother who would give me so much of himself.

My other favorite Christmases would be when my children were little. We always did the early Christmas Eve service with them. As we rode home our children started yelling, "There it is" I asked them what they were looking at and they said, "The Star." They saw the most bright and beautiful star shining down and knew that was the star that led the Wise Men to the Christ child. I loved their excitement and their faith. It brought joy to our Christmas. They always received much more than what they had circled in the catalogs but not as much as they wanted when they wrote at the top of the page, "This page."

Then, of course, there were the Christmas's with the Grandchildren. What joy that was. We would light the advent wreath and have a delicious meal and somewhere in there would come a noise at the door and Grandpa would go out and bring back three presents that had been left at the front door. Santa had begun his gift giving journey. Their excitement was so wonderful and contagious. I loved those times with my grandchildren. There was always a "Pickle" ornament hidden in the tree and they each received a candy cane when it was found.

Now Christmases are quieter, and I often send a gift of money (it wraps well and can be used for what one chooses.) This year I have made Amazon happy and ordered more than I intended. I have not begun to wrap but the tree (small tabletop tree) is decorated, and I am getting out the manger scenes and the Santa Clauses thanks to my son who as usual, helped me with what I needed to do. In all these years I have collected a lot and wonder where I am to put it all. But I look at the ornaments going back to our first Christmas as a married couple and I see the memories and they make me smile. There are the things we made as a family, and the things made in school and the things from grandchildren, and I realize how blessed I am. I've said it before, but God took a three-pound infant whose future was in doubt and blessed her life with children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and the memories of a lifetime. Thanks be to a generous and loving God.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Lord, we thank you for the life given to us. May we remember to use it in your service. We thank you for each day. May we use our days in service to you, remembering those who have needs for this life and the next. Those who hunger, those who have nothing, those who need to hear your word. Thanks be to God for our abundance; may we use it to praise you and to serve your children. Be with our church Lord, may all we do serve to bless you and those in need. Be with Pastor Don and his family, bless him and his ministry. Be with our staff and leaders, help them in all they do. Be with us in this Christmas Season and may we all remember the gift of the Christ Child, born in a manger, born to lead us to you, born to die for the forgiveness of our sins. It is in the name of Jesus Christ 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](http://www.uticaumc.org)**

If you need assistance, call the church office.

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

