



# Weekly Messenger

December 6, 2024

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## "Confessions on Prep Time"

Can I confess that one of the programs I look forward to at this time of year is the Holiday Baking Championship? I enjoy the banter with the judges and the tips they give the contestants. I usually watch the show after it has been recorded. There seems to be something else I need to devote my attention to while the show is on the air, so I watch it afterward.

One of the benefits of watching a recorded program is skipping past the commercials. I like this feature a lot! Sometimes, though, I find myself crunched for time, and I skip past the preparation of the desserts and watch the reveal and tasting by the judges. But, when I skip the bakers preparing their creations, I also miss out on the tips I can pick up. I find if I watch the whole program, I learn things I can use for my own baking.

The season of Advent is our Prep Time. If we slow down enough, we can find the tips God has for us to make our celebration of the arrival of the Messiah more meaningful. If we allow ourselves the time to search our hearts, discern our motivations, and let the Holy Spirit speak deeply into our souls, we can find ourselves better prepared to experience the tremendous blessings God has for us as the season of Advent culminates with Christmas.

I pray we all allow ourselves the chance to embrace our Prep Time.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Don

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# **THE WEEKLY MESSENGER**

## **Upcoming Events**

- November 17th - December 22nd - Angel Tree Ornaments For Sale
- 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.**

## **2024 Love Loaf Donation Results**

Thank you... Thank you... Thank you... from Together-In-Mission for your generous support of our recent Love Loaf offering! These funds will enable the Utica United Methodist Church to meet 2 of our pledges to international ministries, the Mujila Falls Agricultural Center in Zambia and the Water For Life ministry in Liberia as well as partially meeting our pledge to the Haiti Children's Project. Donations for this year of \$1,616.26 are 57% higher than in 2023. May God bless us all for our loving support of His work in serving the needs of God's children, extending to parts of the world where poverty is rampant.

## **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**

## **FOR GOD'S GLORY**

We are grateful for your faithful giving and extra year-end giving for the Operating Fund. The green letters in the title of this article reflect the progress we made in the month of November toward meeting our remaining obligations for the year. Our advancement is directly dependent on the contributions we receive each week.

As of December 1, we still have about \$56,000 in remaining obligations. This includes: \$16,000 for compensation; \$24,200 for utilities, insurance, & upkeep; \$8,000 for ministries & administration; and \$7,775 for conference pensions & ministry shares.

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

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

## Pastor Don's Retirement

It has been a few weeks now since it was announced that Pastor Don is retiring. He will be moving nearer to his daughter and her family. Although it is difficult for us, it is a happy time for Pastor Don and Laura. Pastor Don has been assigned here for 14 years. We have been lucky to have him and Laura that long. They are going to be spending more time with their beautiful grandchildren. This was a privilege I enjoyed many years ago and it was the happiest time in my life. I did not feel the pressure of worrying about what they were eating (Kraft macaroni and cheese was a favorite) nor if they had what they needed for school, never had to ask about homework, I could just be the fun Grandma. They will have this joy. My grandchildren and I remember this as a happy time. I want that for Pastor Don and Laura but most of all for their two grandchildren. I will miss them, but I want them to have this special time in their lives. We won't know who is coming for a few months, but we can honor Pastor Don by welcoming and supporting whoever it is. Meanwhile we can enjoy this time with Don and Laura. Pastor Don has made a difference in many of our lives. I am no exception. I don't know how many times in the 10 years that I dealt with my husband's battle with Alzheimer's that I went into Don's office feeling beaten and down and walked out feeling uplifted and not only ready but prepared to resume the fight. I had a wonderful Stephen Minister that helped me also and between the two of them they encouraged me and kept me going. As I think about this time, I remember the many others from Pastor Don to the United Methodist Men who were so supportive and the woman who would come up and talk with Gene and hug him. I so appreciated her. But as I often do, I am wandering off the title. We will have time and for this I am grateful to honor Don and Laura in the coming months. They have been a special twosome in our lives, but I think we can get another duet from them, many more sermons, lots of Sundays to see Laura in the choir, and lots of conversations with them. Maybe a Pecan Pie here and there. We will celebrate and there will be cake, and we will send them out with joy for having had them here in this time, in this place.

Lord, we thank you for the gift of Pastors who lead us through our lives. They are there in the good and the bad times and they bless our lives. You send us many Pastors and Leaders in our lifetimes but some touch our lives and remain with us in our hearts. That is Pastor Don. We will miss him and Laura, but we will wish them well and remember them always.

Philippians 1:3 I thank my God every time I remember you

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

## 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**

