



# Weekly Messenger

January 3, 2025

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## "January Prayer Focus"

### MY LORD, MY SHIELD

I was repairing our toilet and thus sitting backward on the seat with the tank lid off. Firstly, I hate plumbing repairs. But more than that, I hate paying for plumbing repairs. As I reached for something behind me, I began to slide off the end of the toilet. This slide became more rapid, and I knew I had two options. First, grab the water tank and hope it does not bust off. Second, fall free to the ground. I chose option two, as I did not want to break the tank... BAM!

While I was free-falling, I said, "Lord, please don't make it hurt too much!"

Two hundred and ten pounds hit the floor, and I did not roll back and hit my head. I was able to get up and walk. It was painful.

At this point, you might ask what the point of this story is, or you may be laughing..... While I was thanking our Lord for answering my prayer, I reflected upon my life and realized that He saved me multiple times from serious injury. Some events resulted in a little pain, some in considerable pain. For certain, in each case, I knew it could have been much, much worse. I was in a car accident and awoke in the hospital in time to hear two doctors state that I had most likely broken my neck. The Lord blessed me with a full recovery, for He shielded me from a serious life-changing injury. In my case, I believe the Lord used the pain to provide teaching moments to remind me of His blessings and protections. So many times in my life, He shielded me.

Dear Lord, thank you for the armor you provide that not only protects me from physical harm but also protects me from committing sins. I pray that You shall continue to be my shield all the days of my life, and may my worship of You continue and grow unabated by any of life's issues. Amen

Written by Bob MacKool

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# 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 ones 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.*



# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## A New Year!

Another new year. Hopefully a year that will find us free of inflation, strange / illnesses, short staffing, closures, rampant shootings and all the other ills visited upon us in the last few years. It seems like it is always something. When there is a New Year, we wish for a lot of different things. Some want to go on a diet to gain back a body image they once enjoyed, others wish for a mate, others make plans to finally travel to far off places they have always wanted to see. Our wishes are as varied as our imaginations. God gives us the gift of a new day. Every day we can begin again, a forgiven people. A chance to start over. If necessary, God will give us this gift every day. For me there is always the desire to be better, to do better, to be pleasing to God more. My wish for a New Year is simply to be closer to my forgiving Lord, to listen more and to ask for a humble heart. When I fall short, he forgives me and gives me another and yet another chance. His mercies are endless. My prayers aren't just wishes for a new year but every night I thank him for the day and pray I do better tomorrow. Every morning, I thank God for another day and another chance to get things right. As Christians we don't have to wait until December 31<sup>st</sup> to make promises and seek to do better, as Christians we have that chance every morning that God gives us.

Great is thy faithfulness, Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed thy hand has provided—Great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me!

Great is thy faithfulness written by Thomas Chisholm/W.M. Runyan

Lamentations 3:22-24 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of each day and for the chance to begin anew, for the chance to get it right. Strengthen us when we try, forgive us when we fail. Lord, we ask that you be with those in our midst who quietly struggle, for those who mourn, for those who face illness, may they feel your love and strength. Be with those who are suffering around the world, comfort them and give them your strength. Be with our country Lord, we thank you that we are not at war in some far-off land but ask that you be with us and may we be at peace with each other. May this be the year that our schools are safe, our cities are calm, our churches and synagogues and temples are safe havens, and we truly are as one nation accepting and tolerant of each other. Be with our church may it be your church as we seek your path. Be with our Pastor and bless his ministry as we give him our support and gratitude for all he does. Be with his family and with our families give them your love and peace. Be with our staff and leaders, guide and protect them. We ask these things in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one." Amen

Lord's Prayer from Study Bible, New International Version copyrighted 1995

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

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

