



Weekly Messenger

January 17, 2025

IN THIS ISSUE:

Endowment
Year in Review

Mini Pantry
Update

Lenten Study

Thank you
Note

Warming
Center

Special Giving
Sunday

Devotional

Back Page

"A Tender Ministry at a Tender Time"

In rapid succession, we've had two funerals at church. Make no mistake, a funeral is ministry, it is important for the church, as the message of eternity with God is proclaimed. It is important for the loved ones of the deceased, as it brings them comfort and healing at a time of great need.

One of the things I noticed with both services is the need to increase our hospitality when we have a funeral or memorial service. There are people in the building who are unfamiliar with where to find things, and the pastor is usually fielding more concerns from the family than allows for him to take on the work that three others would do better.

I'd like us to organize a team of folks who will volunteer to help get things ready to host a funeral or memorial service, and to be present in the building while guests are present to make sure no one is left to wonder where to find important things.

Walking with someone who is grieving is something that is done with care and intention. It is a time to bring healing to heavy hearts. Is this something you feel called to do? Please reach out to the church office and let us know. Pastor Don will call a meeting and share important details that will help you succeed.

When we extend hospitality, we open the door for healing to happen.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Don



Utica United
Methodist Church
8650 Canal Road,
Sterling Heights, MI
(586) 731-7667
www.UticaUMC.org

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Congregation, Celebrate the love of Jesus!

Happy New Year (2025) from the Endowment Committee,

We hope that this letter finds you and your family in good health and ready for the challenges and joys of the New Year. With all the unrest in the world and political division in our country, we can rejoice in knowing that God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, praise God.

Al Manning: I would like to thank everyone for making the Endowment Fund such a success. The Fund was started back in 2006 with a balance of \$21,923. During the past 18 years the Fund has provided \$58,099 to many different ministries. We have certainly been blessed, and I want to thank all of you that have made this happen, with both your support and donations over the years. Last year was my last year as Chair of the Endowment Committee. It has brought joy to my heart to see the progress the Fund has made over the years. Charlotte Ramsey will be the new Endowment Chair. Charlotte brings a wealth of knowledge to the Committee.

2024 was another good year financially. The Fund account grew by about 10%. The ending balance for 2024 was \$281,324 this is the highest balance we have ever had. Just as a reminder, The Endowment Fund is managed by the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan; they have done a wonderful job with our investments over the years. Last year, 2024, we disbursed \$8,310, listed below is where the money was used:

\$3,000 - Trunk & Treat	\$500 - TV for Education
\$1,500 - STARS/EXCEL Programs	\$210 - Stephen Ministry Conference
\$1,000 - MCREST	\$1,000 - Oil Change Ministry
\$1,000 - UP Mission Trip	\$100 - Stephen Ministry Training Books

Please consider the Endowment Fund in your estate planning or weekly giving (beyond your regular pledge). If you have any questions about the Endowment Fund, please contact one of the members listed below. The purpose of an Endowment Fund is to provide income on a long-term basis to the many ministries that make our church a vibrant church, a church in which people will find the love and fellowship that only God can provide. You can now send money to the Endowment Fund through the E-giving feature on the church website. We feel this is your Fund and we want the money to be used to support the ministries of our church.

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow." 1 Corinthians 3:6.

Endowment Committee: Charlotte Ramsey (Chair) David Clark, Tim and Barb Fisher, Bob Mowers, Martha Dolenga. We would like to wish you and your family a safe and prosperous New Year.

End of Year Giving Statements

End of year giving statements will be available for pick up starting this Sunday, January 12th. If you submitted a pledge card to the office, you will find a pledge summary statement as well. It is a total of your pledge for the entire year regardless if you pledged weekly or monthly. Statements not picked up in the next two weeks will be mailed out to you.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Mini Pantry Update

Moving forward the needs continue especially as we face cold/freezing temperatures in the weeks ahead. Some ideas for donations:

Powdered Milk in boxes or pouches

Tuna pouches

Mac and Cheese

Instant Potatoes (box or pouches)

Gravy (pouches only)

Adult and Children Gloves, Hats, Scarves

Bars of Soap

If you have any questions please contact the team and we will do our best to answer your concerns.

Melanie Kuzia, Jim and Liza Young

Ron and Martha Powers

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Please join the Tuesday Morning Bible Study beginning March 11th from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm as we dig deeper into our own personal Lenten Journey, why Jesus chose the nails and what God did to win our heart. This can be ordered on Amazon.com. If you don't have an Amazon Prime Account please text or email Martha Powers 586-703-1668 or ron_martha@att.net and I will order the book for you. If you have any questions please see me after church or call my cell.

Is your heart unsettled by the chaos of the world? Are you heavy-laden with bad moments, mad moments, or anxious moments? Today, rest in God's self-giving love and leave all your troubles at the foot of the cross.

In *He Chose the Nails*, Max Lucado observes that the last moments leading up to Jesus' death were not left up to chance. God chose the path; he selected the nails. Our Lord planted the trio of crosses and painted the sign. God was never more sovereign than in the details of the death of his Son. And in those details are gifts Christ provided for us...the cross. The thorns. The nails. His seamless robe. The empty tomb.

God didn't have to give us all these things, you know. The only required act for our salvation was the shedding of blood, yet he did much more. So much more.

In this Easter season study, Max will help you:

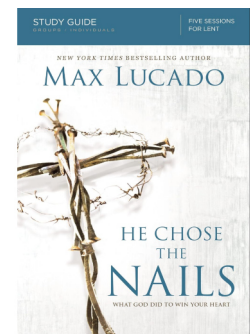
- **Experience Lent** as a time not to just give up something, but to prepare to receive good gifts from God.
- **Take comfort** that Jesus understands everything you face in this life.
- **Receive the grace** of Christ's work *for* us, and **cooperate** with God's work *in* us to make us more like him.
- **Stand firm** in the promise that you are forgiven, and you are welcome in God's presence, no matter what you've done.

Search the scene of the cross and listen for God's gentle whisper, "I did it just for you."

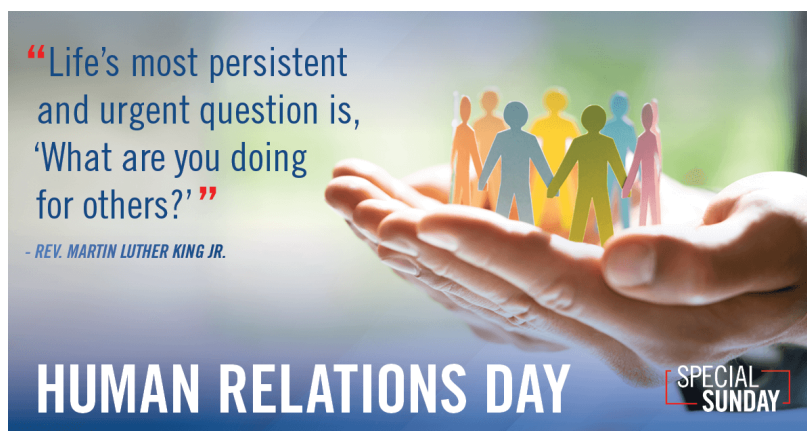
The *He Chose the Nails Study Guide* includes video notes and discussion questions, Bible exploration, an individual application activity, and a Lenten practice to complete between meetings.

Sessions include:

1. He Chose to Be One of Us
2. He Chose to Forgive Us
3. He Chose to Invite Us into His Presence
4. He Chose to Love Us Forever
5. He Chose to Give Us Victory
6. He Chose to Give Us Confidence (optional session for Week 6 of Lent)



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



This Sunday is Human Relations Day - a special offering will be collected. Please use the special envelope provided or write Human Relations Day on the other line of your giving envelope or pew envelope.

On Human Relations Day, we unite to create stronger, healthier communities. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned a world where love and justice reign. Let’s take one step closer by supporting:

- Community Developers
- Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs
- United Methodist Voluntary Services

Warming Center

Utica United Methodist Church will be helping with Warming Center on February 2nd-February 8th. Sign up sheets are available after church services on Sunday, or see Ron Borgacz for ways that you can help. Monetary donations are always welcome, please write Warming Center on the other line of your offering envelope or on the pew envelope. There is also currently a choice through the e-giving site for warming center. You can choose a one-time donation through online giving to warming center this will be available until February 9th.

UMCOR - US Disaster Relief - California Wildfires

On January 7, strong Santa Ana winds in Los Angeles caused wildfires to spread rapidly in multiple communities. Thousands of homes and businesses have been destroyed, as well as multiple local United Methodist Churches. Preliminary assessments of the damage is underway. UMCOR has awarded two solidarity grants to the California-Pacific Annual Conference to undergird their immediate relief efforts. This includes evacuee support like food and essential supplies as well as support for volunteer efforts and other relief activities.

If you are interested in helping in the relief efforts, please consider donating to UMCOR. 100% of the money donated through UMCOR goes directly to help those affected by the disasters. You can write wildfire on the other line of your giving envelope, or on a pew envelope. There is also a place on our e-giving website to donate to UMCOR. The online giving will remain open until the end of February.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

The Loss of a Big Brother

This Sunday Pastor Don's sermon was on "Are you listening for it?" It was listening for the voice of God calling us. I was thinking about my devotional and what I would write about this week. As usual Pastor Don's sermon spoke to me. My brother Bill was a pivotal and great influence in my life. On my 12th birthday our family was awakened by a pounding at the door about midnight. It woke us all up and we realized it was a telegram. It was from the hospital in Balboa, Panama where my brother Bill was stationed. Bill had joined the Army at the age of 17 the previous year. He had had a furlough in April, and it was now June. I had missed him terribly. He was my support, the one I took my troubles to, the one who talked to me and encouraged me in school, the one I went to talk to about anything and everything. The telegram was from the doctors at an Army Hospital in Panama. It said that Bill was in critical condition. It urged my parents to seek a doctor that could explain what was happening. The next night there was another telegram. Bill had died. At first, I did not believe it and felt certain there was a mistake. Surely the one person I could depend on; the one person that loved me unconditionally could not be gone from my life. It took a few weeks for the glass covered casket to arrive and it was indeed my brother. My heart broke. I could not understand a God who would take that sweet, gentle soul. I prayed that I would die because I could not imagine a life without Bill. From then on, my nightly prayers were to be joined in death with Bill. In a few months I awakened one night and was very ill. I thought I was finally dying, and I went back to sleep comforted that I would join my brother. In the morning, I woke up and began to cry because I was still alive. Then I heard a voice, and it seemed to be Bill speaking to me and the voice told me that God wanted me to live. I called out to my mother and told her I was sick. The doctor came to the house and examined me, I had polio. I went on to recover with minimal damage and these days it takes a very old doctor to recognize the post-polio symptoms I still have. I was depressed for a long time and went from a straight A student to C's and D's and barely passing. I mourned for that big brother for a long time. I barely got through 7th and 8th grades but in 9th grade I began to pull myself up and by 11th grade I was again an A student, but I still missed Bill in my life. I missed him in the big things like graduations and marriage and babies and it saddened me because these were things he would never have. But God has a plan, and I know I will see that big brother again one day and meanwhile he lives in my heart.

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear for I am with you do not be dismayed for I am your God; I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Lord, we thank you for the special people you put in our lives that love and support us. Please Lord be with those in our midst who grieve and those who are ill. Be with those going on the Mission trip to Africa, and those who contribute so much to make us a better church. A church that cares for people in need, the hungry, the poor, those that mourn, those who are suffering from the fires in the west, and those who have lost their homes from tornados and storms. May we remember always who we are as children of an awesome God. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson

With a Grateful Heart – Thank You

Dear Church Family,

Thank you to all that prayed for me last month following my surgery. I knew God was with me the entire time and still is. Your cards, phone calls, visits, texts and food brought will never be forgotten – I am truly humbled – I am richly blessed and grateful to have such an amazing church family. Also to my "secret" Angel that honored me with a Christmas Angel, Thank you!

Unending love to all,
Debbie Foskett

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

