



Weekly Messenger

February 14, 2025

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"OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP/SERVE"

When I lead a mission trip, I try to give the team members more than just a work experience. Sure, work is a key part of the reason we make the trip, but I try to offer people on a mission team an experience where they relate their day-to-day time on the trip to the practice of their faith. Having led more than twenty mission trips, I can testify to learning lessons each time I go. I want to share some lessons I learned on my recent trip to Guinea-Bissau, West Africa.

First, everyone has wisdom to share. Mission trips, where you live and work with the same people for a couple of weeks, allow you to get to know people more deeply than occasional interactions. While I was teaching someone to paint and training them on techniques, I asked what training they offered. I discovered they had a deep well of skills, none of which I would have known had I not asked. If our interactions had remained as short and casual as they had been for years, I wouldn't have discovered what God had taught them. Each time I go, I learn that folks have a wealth of experience that I otherwise wouldn't have come to know.

I wonder how we can better find opportunities to learn what our brothers and sisters have to share. I know we would all be better off finding out.

Second, I learned that different approaches to a common task can bring new solutions to my life. A conversation with another team member (who was about half my age) illuminated my way of looking at trying new things. He came from a family of innovators, and when he received a call from home telling him one of the innovations he had spearheaded was not working, he began to buzz with creative solutions.

I wonder how often we shut down creative solutions because we think the way we have always done it is the best way to do it. He recalled the story of three generations of women who always cut off the end of the ham before baking it on Easter. Her new husband asked the youngest why she did that, and she answered because my mom did. They asked her mom, and she said she did it because her mom did. When they asked her grandmother why, she said she did it because the ham wouldn't fit in the pan unless she cut off the end. Habits can be helpful, but if they are just habits without reason, we should be willing to make changes, especially if new solutions arise.

I pray you find the places and spaces to learn lessons and find ways to allow them to impact your life.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Don

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

WAYS TO SERVE UTICA UMC MINISTRIES

Opportunities to Help/Serve Others Beyond Utica UMC

- Help with the Mini-Pantry (e.g., stock the pantry outside, keep the storeroom organized)
- Participate in Celebrate Recovery (e.g., provide childcare, provide encouragement and prayer)
- Help with Prayer Bears (e.g., put tags on bears, ensure they are in pews)
- Help with Warming Shelter (e.g., prepare a meal, serve a meal, guest intake, donate food)
- Help with MCREST (e.g., prepare a meal, serve a meal, donate food)
- Support the Mission Trip to God's Country Community Ministries (e.g., go yourself, donate things for the Church Mouse program, donate money)
- Support TIM projects (e.g., participate in activities, donate items or money when requested)
- Participate in the Oil Change Ministry (e.g., check-in guests, serve food, talk with people as they wait, move vehicles, purchase supplies)
- Support United Women in Faith mission projects (as they are shared throughout the year)
- Help United Women in Faith make apple pies
- Help with the Car Show (e.g., parking lot management, set-up and clean-up, register participants)
- Help with Blood Drives (e.g., serve snacks, help with check-in)
- Help with Drug Take Back Day (e.g., be present to help police officers collect medications)

Opportunities to Help/Serve Individuals at Utica UMC

- Visit those who are shut-in or hospitalized
- Drive a shut-in to/from church
- Help prepare and serve funeral meals
- Join the Funeral hospitality team (e.g., help prepare things before the service, show individuals where things are located)
- Become a Stephen Minister, recruit care receivers, and become a Stephen Minister leader
- Help with set-up and clean-up for church activities (e.g., meals, cook-offs)
- Help with maintenance of the church (e.g., plumbing, electrical, cleaning, gardens/property)
- Help with maintenance of the parsonage (e.g., yard, repairs, updates)
- Assist with specific office needs/tasks
- Join a committee (e.g., Together in Mission (TIM), Trustees, Pastor Parish Relations, Endowment, Finance, Leadership Board, Vision Team)

Opportunities to Serve for Worship

- Become a greeter or be part of the hospitality team at 9:30 or 10:30 service
- Become an usher at 9:30 service
- Join the Chancel Choir (9:30 service)
- Join the Gosbells (9:30 service)
- Join the Praise Band (vocalist or instrumentalist) (10:30 service)
- Serve communion at 9:30 or 10:30 service
- Be a Prayer Minister at 9:30 Service
- Become part of the sound & slides team at 9:30 or 10:30 service
- Be a liturgist (read scripture) at the 9:30 service
- Read scripture at the 10:30 service
- Help with coffee hour after 9:30 service
- Assist on Sunday mornings with cleaning up the fellowship treats and drinks from both services (after 10:30 service)
- Put inserts in the Bulletins for 9:30 Sunday Service
- Refill things in Sanctuary pews (e.g., prayer request sheets, offering envelopes)
- Assist with changing paraments, arranging the altar flowers, and adding special items for particular services or seasons in the Sanctuary
- Help with Sunday morning blood pressure reading program
- Help with Children's or Youth Sunday School at 9:30 and 10:30 Services
- Help in the Toddler Room or Nursery

Opportunities to Help/Serve Children and Youth

- Support the Youthz Group Wednesday night (e.g., help prepare the meal, help with the lesson/craft/activities, monetary donations)
- Help with monthly Youth Cooking classes (e.g., provide food, monetary donations, help with the class)
- Help with STARS/XCEL (e.g., kitchen helper, transportation, special guest presentations, donate)
- Participate in Trunk or Treat (e.g., lead games, lead crafts, help in the kitchen, help at the information table, decorate your trunk and pass out treats)
- Support United Methodist Children's Home (e.g., support a child at Christmas, make an Easter Basket, take Easter baskets or Christmas gifts provided by congregation to the United Methodist Children's Home)
- Help with Scouts (e.g., merit badge counselor, church liaison)

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Mini Pantry

Church Family,

Thank you for your continued and unwavering support of the Mini Pantry. We have dealt with a few "set backs and struggles" yet we remain committed to serve and provide for the hungry in our community. Your gracious and continued support along with that of our neighbors has allowed us to provide food even in the cold and frigid temps during the Michigan winter months. A reminder that we now have a Wagon of Hope placed in the Front Lobby and in the "Back" Hallway into Fellowship Hall. An additional reminder, we are **not** collecting home good items or clothing. If you have items and uncertain as to whether we can utilize your donation, please contact Martha Powers @ 586-703-1668.

Food items needed:

Pre-packaged Rice a Roni, Potatoes, Pasta Dishes and Dry Soup Packages.

Instant Oatmeal Packages

Cereal

Muffin Mixes

Bar Soap

Feminine Hygiene Products

Hats, Gloves, Scarves and Socks (all sizes)

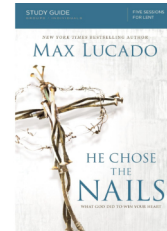
Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.

11) Proverbs 22:9

With Grateful ❤️'s

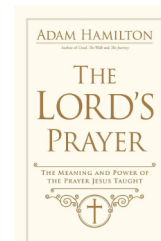
The Mini Pantry Team

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.

Lenten Study - Wednesday Evening



Join Peggy Miller on Wednesday evenings starting on Wednesday, March 12th at 6:30 pm for a Lenten Bible Study "The Lord's Prayer: The Meaning and Power of the Prayer Jesus Taught" by Adam Hamilton. Please join the youth group at 6pm for a light meal before your bible study begins. Please let Peggy Miller know you are interested in joining the study so enough materials will be ordered. Books are \$12.00.

In "*The Lord's Prayer: The Meaning and Power of the Prayer Jesus Taught*," pastor and bestselling author Adam Hamilton guides us to really know -and really pray-the Lord's Prayer. He explores each of its rich lines and their meaning in the Bible, illuminating what we ask of God and what we ask of ourselves through its words. And he teaches us how to use it as a pattern for our own prayer.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

CHILI, SOUP, AND DESSERT COOK-OFF

Sunday, February 23, 2025

4:00 PM



Once again, our Chili, Soup, and Dessert Cook-off will be on Sunday, February 23 at 4:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. Start looking now for some new recipes or some you know are tried and true.

- Sign-up sheets will be available starting February 2. You may enter as many categories as you'd like, and you may enter more than once in each category!
- Prizes will be awarded for the top 3 entries in each category and for the top overall entry.
- Come Sunday, February 23 at 4:00 PM and sample all the entries. You don't need to enter to participate. "Vote" with your dollars (or \$5's or \$10's or more) for your favorite entries in each category. Vote as many times as you wish.
- Bring your friends and family – they will enjoy wonderful food and fellowship with us.
- Proceeds will be used to support the United Methodist Conference through our Ministry Shares.



Red Cross Blood Drive



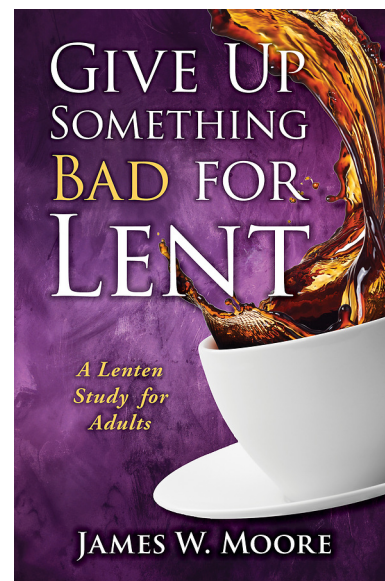
Utica United and American Red Cross are teaming together on February 19 for a blood drive. Appointments start at 11:00 and run until 5:00. You can register at AmericanRedCross.org or call 1-800-733-2767; our sponsor code is UTICAUMC. When you register be sure to ask about the \$15 e-card you can get for donating.

Lenten Bible Study

During Lent each year, Christians give up something as an act of sacrifice and spiritual discipline. Often it is something like chocolate, knowing that after Easter Sunday they can once again enjoy what they have given up. James Moore challenges readers to take it further—to give up something spiritually that they would be better off not doing. He invites all to seek God's help to focus on eliminating one habit or attitude that is destructive. Imagine giving up envy, jealousy, self-pity, apathy, procrastination, gossip, resentment, or negative thinking, how much better life would be.

The forty days of Lent are ideal to use this study and prepare to give up something bad while preparing to fully embrace the Good News of Easter. Study includes seven sessions, one for each Sunday in Lent and Easter Sunday. Each session features a Scripture reference, a personal reading, questions for personal reflection or group study, and closing prayer.

This study will be held on Monday's at 11am starting on March 10th through April 14th. The book will be available in the church office for \$12.00. Please see Pastor Don with any questions.



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

**** THANK YOU ****

The UUMC Macomb County Winter Shelter leadership team of Ron Borgacz, Mary Lawson and Linda Baker would love to thank you for your support. We truly appreciate all your prayers, donations, and gifted hands that helped us throughout the week. We had an average of 77 guests with 86 being the highest. We enjoyed great fellowship with our friends at Christ Church of Fraser who partnered with us to serve on this much needed mission. The Methodist Children's Home cooking students, guided by Dave and Peggy Miller on Saturday morning, made a special treat for the guests at the shelter....what a blessing that was. Again, we thank you so much for all your help and generosity. God bless all those in need.

Help Wanted

The Together In Mission team is looking for someone to lead a series of 5 video classes to introduce students to new ways to do ministry. The class is titled, "Taking Church To The Community". The leader would introduce the video class for each week and conduct discussion questions to share what was learned by the group. The leader should review the videos in advance of the weekly classes to prepare for each weekly lesson. A final report out to the TIM team at the end of the series would be expected. Spiritual gifts that may be enlisted in this activity include: teaching, administration, servanthood. If you are interested in helping with this need or if you have further questions, please contact Barry Croteau at 586-275-8122.

*****Save the Date*****

Spaghetti Bake Dinner Fundraiser

Saturday, March 15th at 5:00pm

You're invited to a spaghetti bake dinner to help raise funds for MCREST. We will have sign-up sheets available starting February 23rd. We appreciate your continued support for this much needed mission.

MCREST provides meals, lodging, life-skills training, and emergency shelter 365 days per year to individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Macomb County. Their mission is to provide homeless and displaced individuals the opportunity for successful transition to independence.

With Appreciation.

UUMC MCREST Mission Team



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Pastors I Have Known

I have written about my Pastors before, but it has come to mind again. I did not attend church until I was 15 years old. When I first went, I went alone. I felt the need to know more about God. My knowledge about God saw him as a vengeful God. There had been no "Jesus Loves Me" songs in my life. If I got hurt, and this included small things like stepping on something, to big things like a box of canning jars falling on my head while I was sleeping, I was told "You must have done something bad, and God looked down." I wanted to know more about this vengeful God. On a beautiful summer Sunday, I walked to Church alone. I walked into that small Church and was greeted warmly by some elderly women. As I sat down in the last pew, looking I'm sure confused, a woman came over and sensed my confusion. The music had started, and I had no idea what to do or how to find the hymn that was playing. The woman showed me the wooden board at the front of the church with the numbers listing the hymns. Then she showed me how to find them in the hymnal. Within a couple of weeks, I was asked to help with the babies and small children in the Nursery in case any came in. Then the Pastor told me there would be a Youth meeting and I was invited. I went and there was 1 married couple, two elderly women and the Pastor and myself. We played a couple of games based on the Bible and I didn't have a clue to the answers. I told the Pastor that they didn't have to do this and that I was happy just learning and attending church. What I learned about God was that he was not vengeful but loved even me. I was hooked on this God. It took me several years until I realized that Christ died on that cross for me, for even me. When I protested that I wasn't worth it, another Pastor would reply, "Christ said "You are." Years later I would learn from another Pastor forgiveness and forgiving. Both significant lessons for a Christian. The lessons learned from our present Pastor have been received often. The greatest lessons came as he was with me for the 10 years my husband suffered from Alzheimer's. He blessed me with words of reassurance, helped me to forgive myself when I felt like I was failing, and kept me grounded when I felt like it was just too much. I am happy for him as he and Laura retire, but sad that he and Laura will not be here. But will be off making memories with Grandchildren, the happiest of times. I have been blessed with all the Pastors in my life and will continue to be from the first to the last and the next to come.

Ephesians 4-11 It was He who gave some to be Apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.

Lord, we thank you for the special people who you place in our lives. Be with us as we accept change, and may we remember that we honor the ones we love by accepting the next to come. Lord be with the ill and those who grieve, the hungry and those in need. May we remember that what we do for others, we do for you. In Jesus name 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**

If you need assistance, call the church office.

Celebrate Recovery, Thursday, 6:30pm

