



Utica United
Methodist Church

Weekly Messenger

December 5, 2025

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"It's Beginning to Look a lot like Christmas"

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. Everywhere you go." This is such a great opening to a fun Christmas song. And today, looking outside, this opening is very true. Most homes are already decorated for Christmas, and we even got our first snow fall of the season. It's cold and blustery outside and just really gets you in the mood to sit by a fireplace, under a blanket, with a cup of hot cocoa and watch your favorite Christmas movie.

Now, I will have to say, I am still not quite ready for Christmas. While we did decorate the outside of our house when it was still warm out, the inside of my house is not in holiday spirit. I still have all my Thanksgiving decorations out; only yesterday did we finally switch the wreath on my door from a turkey to a snowman. I keep asking myself how is it December already? To top that off, Jacob is 2 days shy of being done with his first semester of college, Emily is 2 weeks away from completing her first semester of high school and Chris is a couple weeks from finishing his first semester of seminary. Those final countdown days are going to be busy, finishing up final projects, final papers and studying for exams.

There are times when all the hustle and bustle just become a blur of going through the motions. It becomes even more challenging to take the time to slow down and appreciate the holiday season. So, my challenge to myself this year is to take moments, to find the time to stop and watch a holiday movie, to turn on Christmas music and dance around my kitchen baking holiday treats. It may be to bundle up and go for a walk in the neighborhood with Emily looking at Christmas lights. If you are like me and just feel rushed, or that there is so much to do, I challenge you to take a moment. To do something for yourself, to do something for someone else, but to take a moment to enjoy the Christmas season.

Each Sunday here at church, we are learning about the promises of God. The promise of Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. Let's make each one of God's promises a promise to ourselves this year. Let's promise to find Hope in the birth of Jesus, promise to share the Love of God with others, promise to experience Christ's Joy during the season and promise to find Peace amongst the chaos that Christmas time can bring.

Take the time to come to church and learn about God's promises this Advent season. But also know that if you miss a Sunday, we are still recording the 9:30 service and will have those videos available the following week. We are also now live streaming the 11:00 service. You can find both videos on our YouTube channel and links to them on both the website and on Facebook. Yes, "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas," and I hope that you continue to see God's promises "everywhere you go," this Advent season and beyond.

Rachelle Heldt

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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Upcoming Events

Office News

Looking ahead, the office will be closed on December 24th - December 26th for Christmas and January 1st - January 2nd for the New Year!

United Women in Faith

All women are invited to attend the UWIF meeting on Wednesday, December 10th in Fellowship Hall. It begins with a potluck luncheon at noon. Bring a dish to pass and your own place setting. Drinks will be provided.

Our program begins at 1:00pm with a Christmas Monologue entitled "Swaddling Clothes" which presents the Christmas story from the viewpoint of Mary's Mother, a typical Jewish mother, who has not been blessed with an angel's assurance and is struggling with the problems Mary's pregnancy presents. Come hear this account.

Bell Concert

The Gosbells Christmas concert will be on Sunday, December 14th at 3pm. Mark your calendars now so you don't miss this wonderful holiday concert. There will be an afterglow event following the concert in the Narthex and Parlor. Let's ring in the season with this wonderful holiday concert.

Angel Tree Ornaments

Angel Tree ornaments will be on sale beginning on Sunday, November 30th through Sunday, December 14th, additional ornaments will be sold during the cookie walk on Sunday, December 21st. Ornaments can be purchased in honor of or in memory of a loved one. Ornaments this year are \$15 an ornament. Ornaments will be tagged with your loved ones name and will be hung on the Angel Tree either outside the church office or in the back near Fellowship Hall.

Advent

Starting on Sunday, November 30th we will begin our advent Sermon Series "The Promise:" Advent is a time to reflect on God's promises throughout history and the fulfillment of these promises in Jesus Christ. Each of the four weeks of Advent, we will reflect on each of God's promises of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, and see how these promises are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

11:00am - The Promise of Christmas! - A Family Worship Experience

8:00pm - The Promise Fulfilled! - A Candlelight Service

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

2025 Love Loaf Donation Results

The 'Together-In-Missions' Team would like to THANK YOU so very much for your generous support of our recent Love Loaf offering. These funds will go towards our mission pledges we support through Utica United Methodist Church. We have collected \$1,268.62. We are so grateful for your continued financial support. Your contributions are vital to our ability to serve the community and support our ministries. Your partnership allows us to continue spreading God's love and making a positive difference.

God Bless
T.I.M.

Featured Library Book **Desperate Pastors' Wives** By Ginger Kolbaba & Christy Scannell

This book had me at the title.

The book jacket lures us to read the book with the following entry:

Mimi, Lisa, Jennifer, and Felicia, all live in the fishbowl at Red River, Ohio. Everyone expects something from them. Gourmet casseroles. Perfect husbands. Well-behaved children. They expect even more of themselves.

The constant demands and always ringing phones are enough to drive any sane woman crazy. Add to all that the condescending Katherine Fleming Katt (self-promoting pastor's wife of the town's largest church) who loves to flaunt her superior position. Amid such chaos, will each woman find the one thing she longs for?

When the unflappable Kitty Katt starts showing up at odd places, the four friends get suspicious. Is Kitty hiding something? What secrets lie behind her "perfect" exterior? But even more significant than unraveling Kitty Katt's secrets is finding answers for themselves.

This easy-to-read, suspenseful book provides insight into what goes on in the life of a *Desperate Pastor's Wife*. You'll see the questions they ask, the worries and emotions they feel, their fears and failures, their hopes, their convictions and their faith.

Call Numbers FIC KOL in our church library.

2026 Altar Flowers

2026 is just around the corner and it is time to once again place your orders for altar flowers for next year. Altar flowers are \$25. Payment is not due until the Sunday of your flower order. Please **DO NOT** make a payment for flowers until 2026. Just fill out a card and put it back in the return basket. Do NOT take home the card. I no longer have a record of any "standing" orders, so please make sure to fill out a card if you would like flowers in honor or memory of a loved one.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



COOKIE WALK AND CHRISTMAS DÉCOR SALE December 20 & 21

This year we are adding a new twist to our Christmas Cookie Walk. In addition to filling containers with cookies and breads, there will also be a variety of new and gently used Christmas décor items. The Christmas Décor sale will feature ornaments, table-top or mantle items, and tableware.

Just like previous years, the Cookie Walk portion will be for a free will donation. The Décor items will be priced individually. All proceeds will be used for the many ministries and projects we provide and support.

The Cookie Walk and Décor Sale will be open for the community and congregation on Saturday, December 20 (10 AM – Noon) and for the congregation on Sunday, December 21 (after services). If you would like to help during the sale, please contact Mary Dolenga or Kathy Borlas.

BAKERS – Sign-up sheets will be available beginning Sunday, November 23 for you to indicate how many cookies or breads you will donate. Your cookies can be dropped off Tuesday, 12/16 thru Friday 12/19 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 19.

SPREAD THE WORD – Please tell your friends and family to come to the Cookie Walk and Christmas Décor sale Saturday, December 20 from 10 AM – Noon or Sunday, December 21 after services. If you are a Face Book user, please “Like” our Cookie Walk & Décor Sale event or better yet “Invite” your friends and family.

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. Then, stroll through the tables of Christmas décor and find some things to brighten your home or give to a friend.

We are now Live!

It has been Pastor Albert's wish that we Live Stream our worship service. A group of people have been working together to get a live stream off the ground. This Sunday, November 30th will be our first attempt at live streaming the 11am service. Please click on the link or type in the following to view the live stream - <https://www.youtube.com/@uticaumc5212/live>.

Obviously with trying new things, there will be some learning curves and some trial and error as we work out any bugs in the system. Please be patient with us as we work through this new process and get the live stream launched.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

A Christmas Festival

**2025 Handbell and Pipe Organ Christmas Concert
Featuring: The Gosbells Handbell Choir**

Sunday, December 14th, 2025 at 3pm

**Utica United Methodist Church
8650 Canal Road
Sterling Heights, MI 48314**



Presented by: The Music Ministry of Utica United Methodist Church

****Concert Admission is Free****

**An afterglow of light refreshments will be enjoyed by all at the
conclusion of the concert!**

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

FIFTEEN STARS GUIDING THE WAY TO MEET OUR 2025 OBLIGATIONS



In November we received \$25,330 for the Operating Fund. We paid \$22,700 in Operating Fund expenses. The list below shows our progress in the 15 areas guiding our way to meeting our remaining 2025 Operating Fund expenses. A circle indicates the expense still needs to be paid. A solid star indicates the item is paid in full. We project we will need an additional \$30,000 - \$40,000 to meet our remaining expenses for 2025.

While the Operating Fund may not tug at our heart-strings like some of our other ministries, it forms the foundation of everything we do. Our pastor, staff, and ministries depend on this foundation remaining strong. Each contribution, whether it is \$1, \$10, or \$100 is appreciated and enables us to move closer to fulfilling our needs.

- ★ Pastor & Lay Staff Compensation 11/12 = \$5,622 (*paid in full*)
- ★ Pastor & Lay Staff Compensation 11/26 = \$5,622 (*paid in full*)
- ★ Retirement, Health Insurance & Reimbursements (November) = \$3,676 (*paid in full*)
- ★ Utilities (November) = \$2,878 (*paid in full*)
- ★ Property Upkeep (November) = \$2,492 (*paid in full*)
- ★ Ministry Shares (Part 1) = \$7,500 (*funds available to pay*)
- ★ Ministries & Admin (November) = \$2,883 (*paid in full*)
- Pastor & Lay Staff Compensation 12/10 = \$6,200
- Pastor & Lay Staff Compensation 12/24 = \$5,625
- Retirement, Health Insurance & Reimbursements (December) = \$4,650
- Utilities (December) ~ \$4,000
- Property Upkeep (December) ~ \$7000
- Church Insurance (December) = \$7,950
- Ministry Shares (Part 2) = \$7,500
- Ministries & Admin (December) ~ \$6,500

Giving is a way of honoring God. Proverbs 3:9-10 reminds us, “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.” Thank you for honoring God with your gifts.

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SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES:

9:30AM

with Organ, Choir and Handbells
in the Sanctuary

11:00AM

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. J. Albert Barchue
pastor@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
office@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

