



Weekly Messenger

January 16, 2026

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"Endowment Fund updates from 2025"

Dear Utica UMC family,

Our Endowment Team is excited to share good news about the Endowment Fund with you as we passed another milestone in 2025. The Fund is now over \$300,000 due to another strong financial year. We thank the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan for their guidance and investment strategy with our funds. The Endowment Team will be approving an amount to distribute for 2026 soon. This will be based on 4% of our fund balance.

In 2025, we disbursed \$12,600 for the following:

\$1,500 – Stars/Excel Summer Program	\$2,500 – Live Stream Supplies
\$1,000 – Warming Center	\$3,000 – Celebration Luncheon for Rev. Gotham
\$3,000 – MCREST	\$1,600 - Oil Change Ministry

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

Please consider the Endowment Fund in your **estate planning** or as part of your Sunday donations (beyond your regular pledge). You may also give using E-giving. This can be found on the church website if you do not currently use E-giving.

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.

If you have any questions about the Endowment Fund, please contact one of the members listed below.

Blessings to you all for a fruitful and joyful year!

Endowment Committee:

Charlotte Ramsey (Chair), David Clark, Tim and Barb Fisher, Bob Mowers, and Martha Dolenga

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Warming Center News

Utica United Methodist Church will be teaming up with Christ Church Fraser to help feed and shelter the homeless this winter as part of the Macomb County Winter Shelter run by the WAVE Project organization.

We will be looking for volunteers to help with multiple tasks and will have in person and on-line sign-up sheets starting the first week in January.

The shelter will be available to the homeless for 12 weeks starting 12/21. We will be helping for a week, January 25-31st. This is the second year for this shelter and it is very well organized.

There will be 2 – WAVE Project employees and 2 - security guards at the shelter each day.

Both churches have helped feed and host homeless for years, and will team up with the WAVE Project team for this year's Winter Shelter.

For those of you familiar with the (pre-Covid) Warming Center, many of the people and churches were involved with that program for years.

Here are some details:

When – Sunday January 25th thru Saturday January 31st

Where – The homeless will be sheltered at Trinity Lutheran Church on 8150 Chapp Ave. in Warren (9 1/2 & Van Dyke).

This is where the guests will come and where we will be volunteering.

What – We are looking for volunteers to help with

- **Intake.** Doors will open at 7pm and be open until 9pm. Many guests will line up by 7:00. A full time Security Guard will assist with the intake process. We will also need volunteers to help with "Line Management", organizing the people in line, getting them a number, and setting expectations.
- **Registration.** Log the guest, provide name tag, and verify return guests.
- **Bag check-in.** Bags and coats will be tagged with the guest's number and stored. Guests will not have access to their bags after this.
- **Dinner.** We will provide a dinner for the guests. This can be prepared off-site and brought to, or be prepared in the Trinity Lutheran Church kitchen. We will also put together a grab & go breakfast for the next morning. No lunches are required. We will assist with serving the dinner.
- **Clean up.** We will clean up after dinner.
- **Routine cleaning.** Garbage, sanitizing cots, sweeping, etc.

We will be meeting with representatives from Christ Church Fraser on January 5th to put some final plans together (like which nights we'll be in charge of dinner).

We will have the sign-ups available by Sunday, January 4th and will be actively recruiting volunteers.

Please contact Ron Borgacz if you have any questions @ rborgacz@gmail.com or call 586-243-5538. If you call please leave a message and phone number and I will call you back.

For additional info on the shelter go to the following website. <https://www.waveproject.org/macomb-county-winter-shelter.html>

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We are now Live!

Every Sunday, the 11am service will be shown live on our YouTube channel. Links are also available on Facebook and on the church website.

Please click on the link or type in the following to view the live stream -
<https://www.youtube.com/@uticaumc5212/live>.

The 9:00am service will continue to be recorded and will be posted the following week on YouTube.

***Please remember that if you watch the 9:00am service it is a week behind and the 11am service will be the current week.

Mini Food Pantry Update

A very special thank you to the continued support for the Mini Food Pantry. The cash donations have allowed us to purchase items and utilize sales. The donations from the women who attended the Christmas Tea were such an added blessing. Our shelves are full...."Thanks be to GOD!!!!

As we approach the colder months of winter extra care is needed to make sure the food items placed in the pantry will not freeze and explode. As you continue to purchase items and support this "community outreach" please remember NO GLASS containers.

The best choices:

Cereal

Oatmeal

Soups, Rice and Potato Dishes (in boxes or packets)

Tuna Fish in Pouches

With Gratitude and Thanks,
The Mini Food Pantry Team

GCCM Mission Trip 2026

As we approach the end of 2025 and start to ponder our goals for the New Year, you may be wanting to put your spiritual growth as something to work on in 2026. Our church mission team has once again made plans to serve God's Country Community Ministries (GCCM) on a mission trip to the Upper Peninsula during the week of June 21 - 27, 2026. In the coming weeks our mission team will be soliciting the level of interest from our church in being part of a team participating in this third mission trip to God's Country.

The skill levels of the team will determine the type of work that the team performs. Many details are flexible at this time so our main objective is to share the information we have and discuss schedule and work scope with those who may feel a calling to support this ministry. More details and signup sheets will be available starting Sunday, January 11th after service. Be sure to stop by the table after service to pick up an information packet and let us know of your interest. We will hold our first meeting on Tuesday, January 20th at 7:00 PM in the Narthex behind the sanctuary. Please plan to attend.

2026 UUMC Mission Team
Barry & Colleen Croteau - Mission Trip Organizers

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Featured Library Book

Good Morning, Holy Spirit
By Benny Hinn

Jesus told his disciples "To go forth and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19–20.

With that in mind, I do try to declare faith to others. This book struck my interest as I have challenges talking about The Holy Spirit and The End Times.

Benny Hinn, the author, was born in Jaffa, Israel and his early education was received at a Catholic School and he was raised Greek Orthodox. He founded the Orlando Christian Center in Florida in 1983, and, at one time, he had 7,000 followers in the congregation.

Hinn presents ideas on how to welcome the Holy Spirit and describes his seven revelations of prayer. An individual can still find his messages on Youtube.

This is an interesting book and worth the time to read. However, my background tells me to always get more than one source for information. Matthew 10:16 CSB tells me "Look, I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as serpents, and as innocent as doves."

Give it a read. It may change your mind about a few things, or not! Call letters are 92 HIN.

Office News

Please stop by the table outside the church office and pick up your end of year giving statement. Now is the time to verify the accuracy of your information. Please contact me in the office if you have any questions regarding your giving statement.

Red Cross Blood Drive

Save the date and plan to give blood at the Red Cross Blood Drive on Wednesday, January 28th from 11am–5pm. Please call 1-800-Red Cross (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org.

Human Relations Day

Sunday, January 18, 2026 is Human Relations Day. This is one of our special giving Sunday's in the United Methodist Church. We celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by contributing to building his vision of "the beloved community" by supporting ministries of advocacy and community engagement such as the Community Developers Program, United Methodist Voluntary Services and Youth offender Rehabilitation Programs. Consider donating to this cause either January 18th or January 25th. You can do so by writing Human Relations Day or HRD on the other line of your offering envelope, or you can make a one time donation through our e-giving site by selecting Human Relations Day.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Celebrate Recovery Changing Lives

As we step into a new year, we also celebrate a milestone: **Celebrate Recovery at Utica United Methodist Church is beginning its seventh year of ministry.**

From the very beginning, we've prayed a simple prayer before each Thursday gathering:

"Lord may tonight's meeting, and the words You put into our mouths, affect just one person. Amen."

And God has answered.

The numbers tell a story of quiet, steady impact. But it's not about the numbers. The numbers only hint at the deeper truth: when people show up, healing begins.

Over the past six years, an average of twelve people have gathered weekly. In total, seventy-seven individuals have walked through our doors—each one carrying hurts, habits, and hang-ups, seventy-seven lives touched. Seventy-seven life stories.

Seventy-seven journeys toward hope, and each one finding that hope in Christ and in community.

Celebrate Recovery is often misunderstood. Some think it's only for "those people." But the truth is, we are all "one of those people." Every one of us has been hurt, and every one of us has hurt others. We all develop habits and coping mechanisms to avoid dealing with the pain, and sometimes those habits grow into hang-ups—fears, anxieties, or obsessions that weigh us down.

Celebrate Recovery is not about labels. It's about healing. It's about people helping people. It's about discovering that God's grace is big enough for all of us.

At Utica, our group seems to serve as an introductory, a safe place to begin the journey. Many move on to larger or more specialized groups, but every step matters. Every person matters.

If you've ever wondered what Celebrate Recovery is—or what it isn't—we invite you to join us. **Thursday evenings at 6:30 PM.** Come as you are. Bring your questions, your hurts, or simply your curiosity.

It just may change your life.

In Christ's love,

Bob & Patsy

Celebrate Recovery Ministry Leaders
Utica United Methodist Church

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Changes

If we have lived long enough, we have had to embrace changes in our lives. From our beginnings we were faced with a changing world. We changed homes, we changed jobs, we changed schools. Just a few of the adjustments we make in life. Sometimes the changes are good and make us happy such as marriage, birth of a child, grandchildren, new jobs, new houses, even a new car can brighten our lives. Sometimes the changes are life altering such as death of a loved one, loss of a job, divorce, illness, or loss of a home, or moving and losing friends. We have been undergoing changes in our church. Some of us embrace change; others want things to never change. My daughter and son-in-law have moved several times. I asked my granddaughter Lauren, how she felt about having gone to school in Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. She told me that she felt it had been a good thing, that she could walk into a room full of strangers and talk to people. She related that she knew kids that had never moved and that they were terrified of a room full of strangers. Change and her wonderful parents and the grace of God had given Lauren confidence in herself and her abilities. She had embraced change and grown from it.

In the bible, the disciples are at a loss after the death of Jesus. They have lost their leader, their teacher, their guide. This was the Messiah that they left their homes for, the one they dedicated their lives to, the one they were going to follow. Now he is gone and they don't know what they are to do. They have regrouped and are in disbelief at how their lives have crumbled. The women have gone to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus and have returned to tell them that he is not there. The disciples cannot believe it and even Peter when he sees the empty tomb and the strips of burial cloth wonders what could have happened. And then Jesus appears to two of them and walks with them on the road to Emmaus and so begins the greatest change ever. The disciples are soon emboldened, commissioned, and sent out to go and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. They receive the Holy Spirit and are given a strength they never dreamed of and Christ is with them and in them and he never leaves them.

Changes come into our lives and through them all, Christ is with us. We may not like the change and some are hard but He walks with us through our lives, the good and the bad. We need to grow from the changes into a deeper relationship with Christ, to rely on him and feel his presence. Some changes, like times, where we sit in church, what songs we sing, aren't really important when we consider why we are in church. We are here to worship the most holy God, the one who walks with us through the changes in our lives. Paul tells us in Philippians 3:12-14 "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do; forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Holy Lord, help us to trust in you, to rely only on you and to know that your love can take us through the storms and the changes in our lives. Amen.

Grace Epperson

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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.



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



Watch the 11am service Live on our YouTube
Channel every Sunday morning

<https://www.youtube.com/@uticaumc5212/live>