



Weekly Messenger

February 20, 2026

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"Mercy in the Wilderness"

Have you ever felt temptation? Tried to justify the temptation, that maybe just a little will be okay. Only to discover that just a little of the temptation was not enough and now you are struggling with a desire for more. Jesus got to experience temptation. Let us read Matthew 4:1-11 and see what happened.

Matthew 4:1-11 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." ⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'^[b]" ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'^[c]" ⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'^[d]" ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'^[e]" ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Jesus was not alone in his temptation. God was always there with him, helping to guide him and keep strong against that temptation. God showed a quiet mercy and presence to Jesus. Just like for Jesus, God is with us always. He is that quiet presence in the background. He is constant in his mercy. Temptation can be challenging. The tempter may be loud and difficult to resist, but this story of Jesus in the wilderness is such a huge reminder that God is with us and we are not alone.

As we begin the first week of Lent together, let us reflect on Jesus' journey into the wilderness. Let us remember that as we go about our lives and face our own version of the wilderness, that we are not alone. That God is there with us always.

Father God, we ask that you journey with us into our wilderness. We pray that you bring hope and healing to our lives and to the world that we live in. May your presence be felt even when we are feeling overwhelmed or in doubt. Help to quiet our hearts, and to listen to your still small voice within each of us. Thank you for your presence, Lord. Amen.

Rachelle Heldt

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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Featured Library Book Winter Is Not Forever By Janette Oke

What does winter symbolize to you? To me, winter is the ending of a season whether it is the ending of a long, hard winter season or the completion of another college term or even the breakdown of a marriage. Winter is considered a bleak time and something we often feel ourselves trudging through.

In Oke's story, she follows the life of Josh Jones who is dealing with the challenges of growing up including work, responsibility and love. Josh has come to the end of his high school years and must begin a new season of his life.

The book is easy to read with a slow-moving pace. But if you desire a background in living life in a farmland community, this could be the book for you.

Give it a read. Call letters are FIC OKE.

Thursday Night Bible Study

Thursday Night bible Study with Don and Kathy Weaver will begin studying 1 and 2 Peter starting in March. This is a wonderful opportunity to check out a bible study for the first time or to get back into a bible study if you have not done one in a while.

Meeting Dates:

March 2, 15 and 26

April 9, 16 and 30

May 7, 14 and 21

June 4 – hoping to finish on this date but 11 and 18 if needed.

Save the Date

Join us on June 19th at 6pm for a baseball game at the USPBL (Jimmy John's) field. Watch the Westside Woolly Mammoths take on the Eastside Diamond Hoppers. We have reserved 25 tickets to the patio area with an All American BBQ picnic. Food includes: Hot Dogs, BBQ pulled chicken, sliced smoked sausage with peppers and onions, baked beans, fresh pasta salad, potato chips, cole slaw and cookies. Unlimited Pepsi soft drinks, lemonade, iced tea and water are available. We will get a group photo on the field, greeting message on the scoreboard, meet and greet with the mascots, kids run the bases after the game and complimentary parking in Lot A.

This event has been such a blast in the past. It is a wonderful time to fellowship with other church members while enjoying food and a baseball game.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

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

"If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light with rise in the darkness" Isaiah 58:10

Next month we "spring forward" welcoming Daylight Savings Time...longer days and more sunlight. How blessed are we, God's Church to be called to let our light shine in the darkness that consumes others.

The Mini Food Pantry continues to offer HOPE to those in need, and we continue to be grateful for you, the congregation and your ongoing support. As we face potential freezing temperatures "dry staples" such as **rice, potato and soup mixes** are the best choice of food items. **Oatmeal, Cereal and Breakfast Bars** are also an excellent choice.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact anyone on the MFP Team.

With Grateful Hearts,
Jim, Liza, Melanie, Cathie, Linda, Ron and Martha

MACOMB COUNTY WINTER SHELTER * * THANK YOU * *

The UUMC Macomb County Winter Shelter leadership team would love to thank you for your support this year. We truly appreciate all your prayers, donations, and gifted hands that helped us throughout the week. Thank you to all the meal preppers, meal servers, intake helpers, the food drivers, bag check-in helpers, etc. We had an average of 85 guests per day with 91 being the highest. We enjoyed great fellowship with our friends at Christ Church Fraser who partnered with us to serve on this much needed mission.

Again, we thank you so much for all your help and generosity.
You all are invaluable to this ministry.

God bless you and all those in need,
Ron Borgacz, Mary Lawson, Linda Baker

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Save the Date! Annual Chili, Soup, Dessert Cook-off March 22, 2026 at 4pm

Start looking for your best recipes and testing any flavor adjustments you want to make. Remember you can enter in more than one category. Whether you enter or not come sample and vote (with your dollars) for your favorites. All the money we raise will be used towards our ministries and conference ministry shares. You won't want to miss it....so mark the date on your calendar now! Invite your friends and family too!



Pastor Albert

Pastor Albert sent a message this week to let everyone know that he arrived safely home in Africa on Thursday, February 12th. He was happy to be back with his family and all are doing well.

It takes 2 days of travel to leave from the United States and arrive to his home country of Liberia. Let us all pray for Pastor Albert, that he has a much needed vacation. That he is able to enjoy his time with his family. Let us also remember that when his vacation comes to a close in a couple weeks that we pray for safe travels back to Michigan.

**Secretary of State
Thursday, April 2, 2026
Village of Peace Manor
17275 15 Mile Road
Clinton Township 48035**

Margaret McDougall lives at Village of Peace Manor. A mobile secretary of state service will be visiting the Village of Peace Manor on Thursday, April 2, 2026. There is an hour window from 12 to 1pm that residents of Village of Peace Manor are able to fill from outside of the building.

The mobile secretary of state office does everything that the permanent offices do, but is a much quicker experience. Costs are the same for the services.

If you are interested in making an appointment, please call the Village of Peace Manor coordinator, Trish Iannucci-Waller at 586-790-4500 ext. 5 before March 23rd. If she isn't available please leave a message with your name and phone number and she will call you back as soon as she can.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Lent

Lent begins this week and once again we will know that we will face and endure the dark days. Maybe the darkest days ever. We will go through the preparations. The six weeks of waiting, the betrayal, the trial and the crucifixion but we have the promise of Easter. We will be teased by the entry into Jerusalem, when the crowds adored Jesus, but we know what is coming. We will be in the garden as Jesus prays and he is betrayed. Then the beatings and the trial and we will endure Good Friday once again. But then our sadness will turn to joy as we once again sing “Christ the Lord is Risen Today” and we celebrate a victory.

Matthew 9:14 Then John’s disciples came and asked him, “How is it that we are the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast? Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast. No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, making the tear worse. *Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out, and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.

*NIV Bible In ancient times goatskins were used to hold wine. As the fresh grape juice fermented, the wine would expand, and the new wineskin would stretch. But a used skin, already stretched, would break. Jesus brings a newness that cannot be confined within the old forms.

Dear Lord, be with us in the Lenten season. May we draw closer to you as we go forward to Easter. Give us strength each day. Help us to learn more, to feel more, to forgive more, to understand more and to love more. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Grace Epperson



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

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

CELEBRATE RECOVERY
God Never Wastes a Hurt!

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

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