



# Weekly Messenger

February 6, 2026

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## "Keep the Candle Burning"

I have been struggling with what to write this week for a front page. As I was sitting at work yesterday, a song popped into my head that I haven't heard in many years. I believe we even sang it once in the church back when I was in the youth choir in the 90's. The song is called "Keep the Candle Burning" by Point of Grace. If you get the chance to look up the song, really take a moment and listen to the lyrics. The part that keeps repeating in my head is the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse and chorus.

—When your down and you're discouraged, when darkness clouds your view, you've got to gather up your courage, you know the Lord is gonna see you through. Let me tell you now, tell you now. When you're walking in the dead of night and your soul is churning, when your hope seems out of sight, keep the candle burning. All it takes is one steady heart in a world that's turning. Shine a light and pierce the dark, keep the candle burning, keep the candle burning.“

For me, this time of year starts to become challenging. The cold and snow seem like it is never going to end. I have heard so many stories from our church family of struggles that you have been facing. As a pastor's wife, I also hear the struggles of Chris's congregation. And I don't even want to get started about what turning on the news brings each day. There just seems to be so much darkness and discouragement around us and we all at times just begin to feel run down by the weight of it all.

We can be a light in the darkness. The light of God lives within our hearts. He keeps our individual candles burning, even when we struggle. I truly feel we can all help each other to strengthen and grow that light. Start with something small, say a prayer of thanksgiving each day to God. Pray for someone else. Maybe something a little bigger, smile at someone, offer a nice greeting or a thank you as you interact with people at a store or in a restaurant. Hold the door open for someone. Go a step further and reach out to someone with a phone call, a text message or even mail them a card. These simple gestures can help lift the spirit of someone else and in turn may help lift your spirit as well.

These last few weeks the sermon series has been "Facing Our Giants" and last week the sermon was "The Giant of Discouragement." In facing this giant, we can run and hide and live with the discouragement that washes over us, or we can choose to take an action. To take a step and to live in the hope and promise of Jesus Christ. I pray that we all take an action step, to step out of our own discouragement, or to step with someone else who is feeling the weight of their giant.

Lord, we come to you on good days and also on days when we are feeling down and discouraged. Help us to find the light within you and within ourselves, may that light help to shine on someone else. May we become beacons of light and love within our church, within our families and to our friends and neighbors. Remind us, each day that you are with us, even in our struggles and times of darkness. Give us that gentle nudge, to take a step. Thank you for your love and presence even in the darkness. Amen.

# **THE WEEKLY MESSENGER**

## **Featured Library Item**

**90 Minutes with Don Piper (a DVD)**  
**Produced by Family Christian**

90 Minutes with Don Piper is a continuation of the story 90 Minutes in Heaven. Don Piper was involved in a horrific auto accident, and this DVD tells the story of his rehabilitation after the accident. Don Piper was pronounced dead when the emergency crew arrived at the scene of the accident.

I challenge you to keep in mind as you watch the DVD:

- A) Is the DVD really based on true events that occurred?
- B) How does the DVD compare to what the Bible teaches about going to heaven?

Very enjoyable and uplifting story, make some popcorn and kick back.

Call letters are 90M (in new video case)

## **United Women in Faith**

All women are invited to attend the UWIF meeting on Wednesday, February 11th in Fellowship Hall. We begin with a potluck luncheon at noon. Please bring a dish to share and your own place setting. Drinks will be provided.

The program will begin at 1:00pm with the theme "Prayer and Self-Denial." An offering will be taken.

## **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. Have some food and fellowship with friends. More information to come.

# **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.](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**

Welcome to our newest Team Members, Cathie Parker who will monitor our pantry and Wagons of Hope on Sunday morning and Linda Shene who will shop for specific needs as well as monitoring the pantry on Tuesday's or Wednesday's.

A special thank you to Rachelle and Jim Young who have endured the high winds, issues with the door of the MFP and provided a temporary solution until warmer weather and a permanent redesign and repair. Once again we would like to thank you all for your faithful support of the MFP.

The cold brutal temperatures have challenged us to rethink our food distribution however because of your monetary donations we have been able to purchase and restock our shelves with packages of soup mix, rice mix, oatmeal, cereal, fruit bars, packages of dry potato mixes and pancake mix.

The donation requests for the next several months will remain the same, staples that are not at risk of freezing.

With immeasurable gratitude and thanksgiving for all the support and encouragement this outreach ministry experiences on a daily basis.

Blessings,  
The Mini Food Pantry Team

## **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!

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER



## Gardens of Hope

A \$200,000 life changing campaign to support Engage<sup>mi</sup> partners in Haiti

We can meet this goal of hope with a gift of \$350 from each Michigan congregation



### Join us in planting seeds of hope in Haiti!

Overwhelmingly approved at the 2025 Michigan Annual Conference, this campaign can transform our Haiti covenant partner communities through sustainable agriculture, education, and healthcare initiatives.

### Your gift supports our EngageMI partners

Grace Children's Hospital, HAPI, and Jeremie Rising—nurturing a “healthy field” for lasting change. Half of all donations also empower local leaders through a new partner, Grassroots Community Voices Foundation (MUSO).

### Together, we're growing a future rooted in dignity, resilience, and hope.

We can build a brighter future for Haitian families, fostering resilience and sustainable growth. Every donation counts.

### Special Giving Sunday February 15th

We will be collecting for Gardens of Hope on Sunday, February 15th, mark Gardens of Hope on the other line of your offering envelope.



**Michigan Conference**  
The United Methodist Church

**Engage<sup>mi</sup>**

# THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

## Worry-wart

I tend to subscribe to my Mother's theory that the things we worry about are the things that never happen. Using this theory I worry about the horrible things that may happen but rarely do, feeling that if I take on the responsibility of worrying, those bad things won't happen. This really reared its ugly head when I had children. Working in a hospital I worried about illnesses and injuries. My very young children had padded headboards on their beds because I had seen so many injuries from children bouncing on beds and striking the wooden headboards. I knew I couldn't stop the bouncing but I could protect their heads. I did manage to control my fears so they lived very active and normal lives but through it all, I worried. They did sports and dance and bikes and mini bikes and activities they enjoyed and I suppressed my anxiety even with the broken bones and other more minor injuries. Our son received a BB gun and then other guns as hunting became a part of his life; guns were a major step for me. As they got older, and horror of horrors, learned to drive I worried about accidents and bad decisions but they did well. They managed to grow up confident, healthy, and I hope knowing they are loved. Then came the grandchildren and I had new worries increased by the fact that I was not in control. Then there was football, horseback riding, gymnastics, driving, dating and working in a coffee shop, to worry about. They have also grown up well and strong. Active, involved, caring, and wonderful. The two that are married have given me wonderful grandsons and given me two more to fret over. My worrying has not accomplished anything but through my worries I have prayed. I asked God to protect them all. We have been blessed but not by my worrying. I think my constant and fervent prayers to God have done it all. Bad things happen and our worrying or not worrying have no bearing on them. But our prayers for others, while not always stopping bad things, draw us closer to God and somehow, I believe, draw those we pray for, closer to God also.

Philippians 4:4-7 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough troubles of its own.

Lord, calm our fears, give us confidence and trust. Let us feel you near always. We thank you Lord for our families, for our Church, for our Pastor and staff, for all our blessings. In Jesus name, 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.



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](http://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>