

“The CHIMES” – May

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2021

Continuing the Conversation...

“For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.” (Matthew 17:20)

“But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.” (2 Peter 3:8)



The last couple of months in this continuing newsletter conversation I have briefly shared with you information on the work of dreaming and praying that our Servant Leadership Board is undertaking (along with the practical tasks of decision making for the greater good of the church). The source we are

using for study, “Drawing the Circle: Taking the 40-Day Prayer Challenge” specifically instructs us on dreaming big (anything less is an insult to God). The second instruction was on praying hard (because prayer is the difference between good ideas and God ideas). Most recently we have been challenged to think long (asking questions like, “what difference will what we are doing now make not only for us, but also for future generations).

In thinking long we are challenged to take our praying to another level; a more confident, intimate time with God sharing our BIG God-sized dreams. We are further reminded that we need to trust in God’s timing in answering those prayers. Too often we want things done at the speed of light, but in God’s kingdom things most often happen at the speed of a seed planted in the ground. That seed has to take root before it can bear fruit. We also must accept that God answers in three ways: yes, no, not yet.

The work we do for God’s kingdom is about seeking God’s will and seeking where and how God wants us to join in that kingdom work...and then trusting in God’s timing as we remember that “with the Lord one day is

like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.”

That can be a hard pill for us to swallow in our world of instant everything, but I find great encouragement in understanding that our prayers have no expiration date. We are living today many of the answers to prayers lifted up by Christians that have gone on before us after they dared to dream BIG God-sized dreams and pray BOLD prayers while planting a faith community here at 210 N Court Street in Sparta. We are part of something much bigger than ourselves. That thought while encouraging and exciting also brings a couple of questions to mind.

First, are we living life and ministry in such a way as to honor the prayer legacy we are part of? Are we trusting God to answer prayers in and through us as we faithfully seek to follow Jesus here and throughout this community?

Second, are we continuing to dream BIG God-sized dreams and pray BOLD prayers so that this church, this community of faith, continues to see God’s wondrous works done here well into future generations? I am reminded here of the story of Cornelius found in Acts 10. He as an Italian centurion, a devout man who feared God, who gave generously, and prayed constantly. One afternoon as he prayed he was startled by a vision of an angel. The angel spoke saying in part, “Cornelius, your prayers, and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.” I love the imagery of our prayers and giving ascending as a memorial before God. What kind of memorial are your prayers and giving building?

Please understand, it isn’t that God can’t work wonders without us. God can. But the thing is, God wants to involve us; God wants us to want BIG God-sized dreams happening in and through us. So God waits for us to come in prayer, in all **humility** seeking God’s will for us and the world, knowing we can’t bring about those dreams on our own.

But, God also invites us to come **boldly** to God’s throne of grace as a beloved child of God. Parents and grandparents think about how you felt when your child or grandchild worked hard, letting their creativity flow on a piece of artwork; and then they brought it to you, giving it to you with all their love.

Continued...

I know many such works have made it to my refrigerator, a kind of memorial to my child's love.

I imagine that is how God feels when we bring our BIG God-sized dreams to him and ask for his help in living them out.

The Servant Leadership Board will continue our focus on prayer, even as we begin to explore more fully over the summer what our BIG God-sized dreams for Sparta United Methodist Church are. If you would like to learn more about the prayer challenge please let me know, or if you would like to share some of your BIG God-sized dreams for this church, I am always eager to hear from you. I hope all of you will join in prayerfully asking: What are we doing as a church that will make a difference for the glory of God a hundred years from now?

Serving and leading in Christ's love!
Pastor L

"The greatest tragedy in life is a prayer that goes unanswered because it goes unasked."
—Pastor Mark Batterson



Our Deepest Sympathy to:

The family and friends of Gary Underland who passed away on March 12. Gary and his wife Carol were members of the Sparta UMC before moving to Minnesota. He is the brother-in-law of Chuck and Julie Adams.



The family and friends of Edward "Curley" Holz who passed away on April 9. Curley & his wife, Maxine, have been long time members here.



Thank you to the Sparta UMW for the beautiful azalea plant for our anniversary that we celebrated

on February 25. And a special thank you to Cathy for delivering the plant and the Lenten devotional booklets. It is great to be remembered by our Church family!
John and Diane Noonan

Many thanks to the SUMC members for your thoughts, prayers and kindness during the difficult time of losing my mother.
Donna Burnham and family

Thank you!

I want to thank all my friends at the church for the lovely birthday cards you sent me for my 93rd birthday. I really appreciate the cards. God Bless You!
Love,
Bev Laufenberg



Thank you to all who have donated to Soles4Souls!

We have collected 585 pair of shoes through April!

CHANGING THE WORLD
ONE PAIR AT A TIME



Records and History Committee Update

Greetings Everyone,

It is with a heavy heart, that I inform you that our Committee has decided to postpone **Our Community in Concert** until 2022. There is a lot of preparation that goes into this event and we are still uncertain of how our community will be when October rolls around. Please know that we want to continue this great event and will do so when we know what our new normal is. By then, hopefully, there will be protocols in place and we can insure everyone's safety whether they are performing or attending as our guest. Thank you so much to those that expressed an interest in performing and those that come to support our musicians. The show will go on, just not in 2021.

We Are – Keeping the Eternal Flame Glowing

Little Free Library

Thank you to Sara and Dana Kemp for your donations to the Little Free Library. We are so thankful for your donations and if anyone else has left books and I have not acknowledged those donations, thank you also! We are keeping many minds entertained with your thoughtful donations.

Margie Lakowske, Little Free Library Steward



Servant Leadership Board Update

At the April board meeting a good discussion was held around our current worship services. We have much to celebrate as church:

- The “bugs” are getting worked out of our livestreaming and recording process. We now have four teams trained for and they are all becoming more confident in this important ministry. If you are interested in being trained to livestream and record services please let Pastor know.
- Spectrum recently came in and updated our modem, which was quite outdated. They also increased our download and upload speeds which makes a big difference in the quality of our livestreaming and recording.
- We have a group of liturgists trained to help lead worship. The training is necessary because we have a few new things to consider with the livestreaming and recording of services. If you are interested in being a liturgist please let Pastor know.
- More people are feeling comfortable coming back to worship in person with the safety practices we have in place.

Some challenges we are still working out in worship:

- More people are feeling comfortable coming back to worship in person but don't like the safety practices we have in place. After a good discussion it was decided we will keep all of those practices in place at this time including the wearing of masks during the worship service. If people don't want to wear masks there is always the option of participating in the service online. Many of the people who come because we have the safety practices in place do not have the option of joining worship online.

Pastor also reported that she has reached out to the confirmation students about starting to meet again. Two of the four students will be coming back this spring/summer for a condensed class and we will plan for a confirmation service in early September.

If you have any questions or comments for the leadership of this church you can contact Pastor or any of the Servant Leadership Board members. As a reminder the Board members are: Paul Foulke, Julie Hanson, Dave Kemp, Peggy Wright, John Lodico, Priscilla Hemmersbach, Toni Burrows, Cheryl Isensee, and Ron Phillips.

You can read the full minutes on the bulletin board in the hallway across from the library.



Shop with scrip...support your church



Thank you to everyone who continues to support the church through the shop with scrip program.

The next scrip order will be going in on May 9. You can mail your order directly to Cheryl Isensee at: 9262 Festival Avenue, Sparta, WI 54656. If you have questions or need an order form contact Pastor Loretta at the church (269-6949) or on her cell phone at (608-386-1862).

If you find yourself in need of a card before the next order goes in give Cheryl a call and ask if she has the card you need. She sometimes has a few extra scrip cards for local businesses on hand.



Rummage Sale

Mauston United Methodist Church is having a rummage sale. They are located at 420 Suszycki Drive (just off of Milwaukee Street.) Thursday, May 6, 4-8 p.m., Friday, May 7, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m., Saturday, May 8, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. bag day sale. Profits will go to local, national and international mission work.



National Day of Prayer is May 6. If you are interested, you can pick up prayer resources in the church office or visit the website at <https://www.nationaldayofprayer.org>.

Altar Plants



UMW would like to thank all those who signed up for one or more plants on one or multiple dates for 2021. Each date has two lines for one plant per line. Plants are \$4.75 each or two for \$9.50. Plant money goes to Eileen Gajewsky, UMW treasurer, who pays the invoice from Sparta Floral quarterly.

These dates are still open to honor, remember or celebrate: June 20 (2 spaces). Call the church office if you would like one or more of these dates/spaces and Michele will add to the Altar Plant calendar in hallway.

Thank you to the volunteers who deliver plants to church and to designated recipients after a service. Plants and volunteers brighten our days.

Thank you for your continued support of UMW,
Cathy Nichols



Church Facebook Page

Have you checked out the church's Facebook page? It's a good place to keep up with what is going on in the church and easily access the online worship services.

You can find that site at:
www.facebook.com/UMCsparta/. Once you are there just "like" the site and you will receive updates when new information is posted.

Change: Nothing stays the same

"In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free! In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see." —In the Bulb there is a Flower, Natalie Sleeth, UMH # 707

There is nothing like a crisis to help us to reset priorities. With Covid-19 we have witnessed job layoffs, deaths, social and economic upheavals, and health emergencies. Despite our natural resistance to change, we are learning new ways to live. On account of Covid 19, what personal priorities have you reset?

Toilet paper. Seriously. Will we ever take lowly "TP" for granted again? Toilet paper is just one of the countless everyday blessings that the pain of COVID-19 has taught us to savor – along with worshipping beside loved ones, going to work, getting paid, shopping, going to the movies, and on and on. (What's on your list?)

We are not just individuals; we are brothers and sisters in Christ. As a follower of Jesus, what priorities have you rearrange? How will the Holy Spirit guide us to a "new normal" of holy living as both disciples and community that will be different – and better – than what we have known?

May the "new normal" find us better stewards of our lives -- less greedy, less self-focused, less preoccupied with silly things, and more centered in Christ, more loving to our neighbor, more generous, more hopeful, and more tolerant.

Rev. Krystal Goodger, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

Visit the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation at www.wumf.org or Facebook/wumf.org or call 1-888-903-9863



Congratulations!

Congratulations to all of our high school graduates. God bless you in your future endeavors.

K'Lynn Friemoth, daughter of Ron and K'Andrea Ebert

Courtney Goodenough, daughter of Nathan and Melissa Goodenough

Peyton Hale, son of Steven Hale

Free Bakery Mission



Ever Sunday for the past nine years, volunteers have picked up and delivered bakery products from Festival Foods. These items are available on Monday mornings starting

May 3, inside the church at the “K” Street entrance and the public is welcome.

Thank you to those who have helped in the past: Dean and Ann Olson, the late Willard Pfuhl and Linda, Pat and Mike Spors, and Rich and Danette Zidich.

Our current volunteers are: Ron and Donna Burnham, Pat and Gail Clark, Paul Foulke, Jeff and Priscilla Hemmersbach, Dave and Sara Kemp, Kurt and Amy Keifer, and Kevin and Margie Lakowske. Thank you for helping to keep this mission going! —Cyndi Wise



Mother Dear

Beautiful things in this life
Are manifold 'tis true,
We count the stars by thousands,
The birds and flowers, too;
The sunsets and the dawns,
Rare beauties far and near,
But all the wide world over,
There's just one "Mother Dear."

May Anniversaries

- 10 Joe & Betsy Tadisch
- 12 Dwain & Betty Jones
- 21 Mark & Denise Halverson
- 27 Margaret & Lloyd Chenoweth

May Birthdays

- 02 Gale Rugg
- 04 Richard Dale
- 04 Judy Erickson
- 05 Carolyn Lieder
- 06 Abby Smith
- 06 Denise Halverson
- 06 Scott Thurston
- 09 Joshua Ebert
- 09 Ellen Hemstock
- 09 Dorothy Zillmer
- 10 Brittany Flury
- 14 Muriel Canfield
- 18 Lorna Schamens
- 18 Liz Risseeuw
- 20 Steve Hale
- 20 Jonathan Loeffelholz
- 20 Bob Olson
- 21 Aidyn Hanson
- 21 Jason Moore
- 22 Tom Hemstock Jr.
- 24 Joey Esterline
- 30 Eric Cole



Thank you to...Cyndi Wise for decorating the Easter cross and thank you Bob for helping get it set up outside so it was there giving us all a sign of resurrection hope on Easter morning and throughout Easter week.

From the Parish Nurse...

God is our Peace Giver

God alone brings peace. In fact, in Philippians 4:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, and again in Hebrews 13:20, He is called "the God of peace." Jesus Christ is also seen as the One who gives peace. Jesus said, "My peace I give to you."

Life can be challenging, but God is always good!

We often hear people say they would like a little "peace and quiet." I think we can all say a hearty "amen" to that, especially with all that is taking place in our world right now. Yet, I wanted to take a few moments to encourage you on this thought of "peace."

At times, we have wrongly concluded that peace is simply the absence of conflict of any kind, yet we forget that Jesus came into a world that was filled with political and moral turmoil.

Maybe you just lost someone close to you, or you're about to. Sometimes it feels like you're carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders, and it could all come crashing down on you at any moment.

Perhaps the yearlong Covid pandemic has you in knots, wondering will we ever get back to "the way it was." We may be tired of isolation, masks, social distancing—not seeing our families and friends on a regular basis. But hopefully we can remember why we have been isolated and wearing masks—yes the pandemic. It has been and still is for our safety and health, for protection and respect for ourselves and for others.

God tells us to let him do the worrying. Which is extremely difficult, especially when we count all the things that are keeping us from "being happy."

Stress and worry are hard to shake because they latch onto the things that are most dear to you. Trying to get rid of stress is like going through a rehabilitation, and then relapsing less than two months later, then relapsing again. It's a lot of practice, and once you think you've shaken off the demons, they're back again, telling you everything isn't okay—well, here's the thing. Sometimes, everything is not okay. It's just not. We live in a broken world full of sin, pain, suffering, and injustice. And aren't we all going through good times, bad times, or tough times?

Yes, stress and worry are hard to shake because they latch onto the things that are most dear to us. However,



God will handle it. When we trust Him, we receive this divine peace that comes only with knowing that someone *more qualified* than us can handle our baggage. Just because we give God our problems, that doesn't mean we forget about them. Instead, we choose not to let our worries keep us from being joyful, or from dragging us down into deep sadness. We pray to communicate with God that we need help, and he graciously extends His comfort and peace to us. Instead of worrying about what others think of you, or stressing out about your packed schedule, we can hold our heads up high because we have counted the blessings that God has given us.

Remember, He was, and IS the Prince of Peace!
In Christ's Love,
Priscilla



Sparta UMC Web Page Update

Our church Web site is updated with a new page that has direct links to our 2021 worship services and Chimes newsletters. You can find it at: lewaughtal.wixsite.com/spartaumc

Once you are at our Web site, click on the "Stay Connected" link and it will give you options to go the worship or Chimes newsletter sites.

We hope you find this new feature helpful.



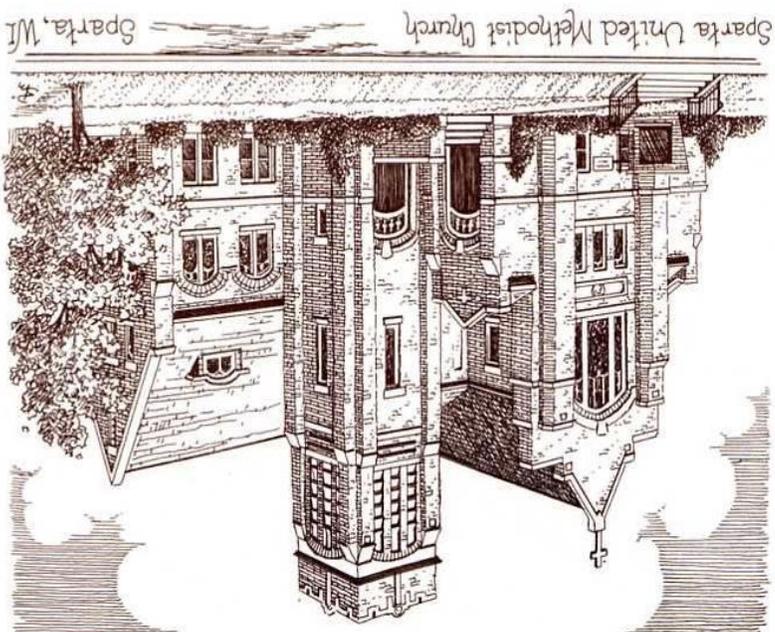
The Chimes

Sparta United Methodist Church
210 N Court Street
Sparta, WI 54656

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Prepared Especially For:



Pastor: Rev. Loretta Waughtal
Pastor's Cell Phone: (608) 386-1862

Phone: (608)269-6949

Fax: (608)269-6940

Email: office@spartamethodist.com

Website: lewaughtal.wixsite.com/spartaumc

SUMC Worship Schedule

In-house Service

9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings

Online Service

YouTube: Sparta UMC month day year