

# Sparta United Methodist Church

210 North Court St. Sparta, WI 54656

(608) 269-6949 | office@spartamethodist.com | www.spartaumc.net

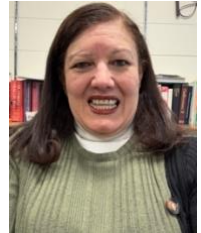
Reverend Lourdes Magalhães - Pastor

## Chimes Newsletter, March, 2026



### "Bridges of Hope & Grace:

#### Connecting hearts, generation, and neighbors through Christ's love"



Dear Beloved Members and Friends of Sparta United Methodist Church, March in Southwest Wisconsin is never just one season. One morning frost still clings to the fields. By afternoon, snowbanks begin to soften. The trails turn muddy. The light lingers longer in the evening sky. Beneath the surface, something unseen is stirring. This in-between season feels a lot like Lent. It does not arrive to shame us. It arrives to awaken us.

As the snow melts and reveals what has been hidden beneath, we may begin to notice what has been resting quietly in our own hearts. Not dramatically. Not rebelliously. Just gradually.

Where have we drifted? Where has busyness replaced presence? Where has worry replaced trust?

The prophet Joel carries God's tender words: "Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart..." (Joel 2:12, CEB).

Notice: *Even now.*

Not when life slows down. Not when we feel spiritually strong.

Even now. Lent is a season of return.

When the Light Lasts Longer as daylight stretches a little further each evening, we sense hope before we see full bloom.

That is how grace works. It often begins quietly. Psalm 51 prays, "Create a clean heart for me, God; put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me." (Psalm 51:10, CEB)

Lent gives us permission to pause and pray that same prayer. Perhaps you may begin to notice small invitations: A softer response. A restored conversation. A moment of prayer before reacting. A willingness to listen instead of defend.

Our yearly theme — *Bridges of Hope & Grace* — reminds us that bridges are not built overnight. They are built intentionally, one strong beam at a time. So as we celebrate 175 years of faithful ministry at Sparta United Methodist Church, we remember that every generation has faced winters — economic uncertainty, cultural shifts, personal grief — and yet God has remained faithful. Grace has always carried us forward. That same grace carries us now as we practice fasting that forms love.

Traditionally, Lent includes fasting. But fasting is not only about food. In the Wesleyan tradition, spiritual disciplines are never punishment — they are pathways of transformation.

John Wesley taught that faith expresses itself through love. Personal holiness and social holiness belong

together. So what if this Lent we fast from attitudes that harden the heart?

What if we fast from: Harsh words — and practice blessing? Indifference — and practice noticing? Cynicism — and practice hope? Constant distraction — and practice presence?

Imagine what might happen if, for now to end of lent days, we intentionally allowed Christ to reshape our reactions. Even now, we can practice. 1 Corinthians 13:11 " *11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, reason like a child, think like a child. But now that I have become a man, I've put an end to childish things.*" we have opportunities all our life to grow mature and leave behind the childish behavior we carry along as a heavy load. That can be lighten when our eyes focus in Jesus model.

See, Jesus consistently moved toward the poor, the overlooked, the burdened and Lent gently asks us: are we moving in that same direction? *"Be holy, because I am holy"* 1 Peter 1:16 Holiness is not perfection. It is love in action and that is what changes self, changes communities. you still have time to embrace this season of Holistic Renewal. Just as the earth thaws gradually, spiritual renewal unfolds gently. You may not need dramatic change. You may need daily alignment.

A few quiet minutes in the morning light. A whispered prayer while driving through town. A kind word to someone carrying unseen weight. A small act of generosity. A courageous step toward reconciliation. Science now confirms what our faith has long taught: repeated practices reshape the heart and even the mind. When we practice gratitude, compassion, and prayer, we grow more resilient. More peaceful. More Christlike. This is sanctifying grace — God steadily forming us. Perhaps this Lent, God is not asking you to strive harder — but to soften deeper.

Where is God inviting you to return?

Where is God inviting you to restore?

Where is God inviting you to reach outward? Maybe, just maybe the invitation is for you to become bridge.

As a church marking 175 years, we stand between generations — honoring those who came before and preparing the way for those who will follow. This year we are called to be bridges. Bridges between loneliness and belonging. Bridges between fear and courage. Bridges between hurt and healing. Bridges between winter and spring. Remember, bridges are built in one act of love at a time. So when Easter light comes — and it will — may it find us softer, stronger, and ready. Ready to live as people shaped by grace. Ready to love more intentionally. Ready to carry Christ's hope into our homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods.

### **A blessing to you and your family**

May the God who melts winter's grip soften every hardened place within us.

May Christ guide our steps toward the poor, the overlooked, and the hurting.

May the Holy Spirit restore what has drifted.

And may Sparta United Methodist Church continue to be a living bridge of hope and grace — for this generation and the next.

With gratitude for walking this journey together,

***Pastor Lourdes Magalhaes***

Sparta United Methodist Church

*175 Years of God's Grace and hope*



## **ALB - Accountable Leadership Board, Summary of the 2/3/26 Meeting**

The Accountable Leadership Board (formally Servant Leadership Board) met on Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026. Highlights of the meeting include:

Changing name of Servant Leadership Board to Accountable Leadership Board to clarify and better reflect the purpose of oversight and vision, rather than being the servants “who do it all.”

Begin using the **Consent Agendas** at meetings in an effort to streamline the length of meetings.

Committee reports will now be available to the Accountable Leadership Board in advance to the meeting, and if not needing additional discussion, will be added to the consent agenda, so as to more efficiently make use of our time together.

Committee reports requiring additional discussion will be handled during the meeting as before.

**Sound system update:** As of Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, all 4 TV/monitors in the sanctuary are working/being tested to show us how the new system works for those watching online. The sound system provider is in the process of making final adjustments, and training of tech staff has begun. The project is nearing completion.

**Church Keys** – Scott Naeseth is now working on a complete listing of where church keys are located, and has developed a policy for those having access to the church. Going forward, there will be a penalty assessed for those issued keys if the key is lost. The penalty being the person/entity losing a key will be responsible for replacement of locks and 10 new keys.

**Pastor Lourdes outlines** activities she has done/is

doing to provide for the needs of our community of faith.

These include:

increased hospice care to members at home and in nursing homes;

plans to celebrate 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SUMC; and Safe Sanctuary Guidelines related to Latino and other minority groups in light of ICE actions nearer to our home church.

The committee asked for more direction from our Superintendent as to how we might respond should ICE agents or minorities come to our door.

**Next Meeting: Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 at 6pm.**

**All are welcome to attend.**

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Judy Fuhrmann*

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## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The current balance in our operating budget as of February 13, 2026 is \$29,705.81.

The commitments made on the pledge cards for 2026 are doing well. thanks for keeping up the good work!

Thank you also for your continued effort to help with the general budget and funds to continue our ministry. It shows we are accountable for 175 years in ministry, here.

The Finance Committee will meet sometime in March but a date has not been set yet.

We still need to add at least one more person to this committee. If anyone has any interest at all, please contact Paul Foulke, Pastor or myself.

We meet on an as need basis during the year.  
God Bless!

*Julie Hanson and Paul Foulke - Finance Co-Chairs*



## NURTURE COMMITTEE

"Love one another...♡

### March

**March 8<sup>th</sup>**, "International Woman's Day" Brunch after worship service with Rachel Frazee, great speaker. Invite

your friends and neighbors to celebrate this day.

**March 29<sup>th</sup>**, Palm Sunday

**April 2<sup>nd</sup>**, Maundy Thursday – 24 – hour Prayer Vigil (sign-up sheet will be posted)

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>**, Good Friday – 9am Stations of the Cross Ecumenical Walk with service following at Schanhofer Funeral Home. \*\* For those not walking, our chapel will offer the Stations of the Cross.

**April 5<sup>th</sup>**, Easter! "Blooming of the Cross" (order forms for lilies & cut flowers available to purchase on your own)

**"Stay connect to God –Stay connected to others."**

Thank you,

Kurt Kiefer, Joe Tadisch, Scott Naeseth, Rose White, Ron Ebert Sr., Pete Foss, Mac & Abby Smith for serving a delicious Shrove Pancake Breakfast with sausage, fruit salad, and bars – it was wonderful!

Nearly 50 attended with and offering of \$130. All of us truly enjoyed this winter breakfast! Thank you to Lynn Humphrey for preparing activity for kids.

*- We love welcoming new ideas and hands to help making our ministry a great engagement to all want to help – contact us.*

Cyndi Wise



## RECORDS AND HISTORY

**LAST CALL:** The last call for pictures to be included in the Church Pictorial Directory is March 15<sup>th</sup>. If we haven't heard from you, please know we would

love to include you in our Directory. If you don't want to share a picture, please contact the office and update your contact information. If you aren't sure we have your current information, just call the office and share your current information. The office number is 608-269-6949. Thank you so much.

You can submit a digital picture to, yBarb McGreevy at [bar64ha@gmail.com](mailto:bar64ha@gmail.com).

There is also a short form we need you to complete to update your contact information. If you have questions please contact Margie Lakowske, 608-272-3331 (Landline) or 608-633-3588 (Cell)



Find us on Facebook [www.spartaumc.net](http://www.spartaumc.net) share in your Facebook our events and what you learned in the church through the service and ministries.

This is one way you can testify God's glory and blessings to the world.

Being Christ like to the world; starts with you and me, and it starts here!!

Another way to keep connected with us is Follow us on YouTube for viewing of Sunday Service

Visit our website at <https://www.spartaumc.net>

## TRUSTEE REPORT

We had a phone meeting with a group from the conference to offer us some ideas to help more fully use our facilities here at the church. The name of the group is REVIVE. We informed them of the current activities here at the church. They offered us some ideas and direction which we will discuss at our next meeting. A notice will be posted for that and all are welcome to attend. The future of the church is everyone business and all ideas are welcome. We will be posting some "Church Use Only" parking signs on the K St side of the building to hopefully deter the usage by others. Anyone who has any experience in welding is needed to help repair our current lawn mower.



**Thank you, Scott Naeseth - Chairman**



**Thank you to all who have donated  
to Soles4Souls We have sent  
390 shoes so far in 2026  
Thanks be to God!**



## Pizza & Movie Night!

**Who:** Everyone is welcome

**What:** Pizza and a Movie

**Where:** Sparta United Methodist  
Church small kitchen and chapel

**When:** Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 6pm for pizza and  
6:30 for movie

**RSVP:** Please contact Toni Jensen at 608-343-3029



before noon on March 21<sup>st</sup> if you will be attending  
so we know how much pizza to order.

**Reminder** – Pizza and a Movie will be cancelled if  
temperatures are forecast to be below 25 degrees  
or above 85 degrees.

## “Disciples in the Moonlight”

In the not-too-distant future the Bible has been outlawed in the United States of America and replaced with a government approved Bible. A group of seven Christians from Indiana are asked to smuggle the true Word of God to underground churches in Kentucky, Illinois, and Ohio. With Homeland Security hot on their trail, the smugglers must be willing to risk it all for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

(Not Rated)

Blessings, *Toni Jensen* ☺



**Join the Women's Breakfast  
& Men's breakfast Fridays**  
at 8 am at Family Rest.  
both groups meet separate for  
a time of fellowship and grace

## NEEDING A CARD FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL?

You can now find new and recycled  
cards for all occasions:



**Birthdays, Anniversaries, Weddings,  
Thank Yous, Get Well, Sympathies,  
and Holiday Cards!**

**The cost is only 50¢ each.**

**All proceeds go to our**

**Missions & Outreach Fund.**

**You can find them in the Gathering Place!**



## LEADING WORSHIP SERVICES IN MARCH

### March 1<sup>th</sup>:

**Ushers:** Kurt & Amy Kiefer

**Tech Team:** Annabelle & Emily Von Ruden

**Liturgist Leader:** Marty Walley

**Coffee Fellowship:** Van Ruden Family, Julie & Dennis Hanson.

**Song Leader:** Choir

### March 8<sup>th</sup>:

**Ushers:** The Eberts

**Tech Team:** Josh Ebert & Amy Kiefer

**Liturgist Leader:** Beth Nowak

**Coffee Fellowship:** Karen Joos, Beth Jerman, Toni Jensen

**Song Leader:** ??

### March 15<sup>th</sup>:

**Ushers:** Rich & Danette Zidich, Peggy Wright

**Tech Team:** Ron & Kristine Phillips

**Liturgist Leader:** Beth Nowak

**Coffee Fellowship:** Amy & Kurt Kiefer, Abby & Mac Smith, Margie Lakowske

**Song Leader:** Choir

### March 22<sup>nd</sup>:

**Ushers:** Kurt & Amy Kiefer

**Tech Team:** Annabelle Von Ruden & Cheryl Isensee

**Liturgist Leader:** Judy E. Fuhrmann

**Coffee Fellowship:** Kristine & Ron Phillips, Nicole Thompson, Pat & Gail Clark

**Song Leader:** Praise Band

### March 29<sup>th</sup>:

**Ushers:** Peggy Wright, Annabelle Von Ruden

**Tech Team:** Johua Ebert, Amy Kiefer

**Liturgist Leader:** tbd

**Coffee Fellowship:** Laurie Bartholomew, Scott & Rose White, Julie Rogers-Adams

**Song Leader:** tbd

## ANNIVERSARIES



14<sup>th</sup> Pat & Gail Clark



## BIRTHDAYS

2<sup>nd</sup> Andrea Cole

3<sup>rd</sup> Lillian Ebert

5<sup>th</sup> Ana Bonilla

6<sup>th</sup> Mac Smith

7<sup>th</sup> Derek McDonald

8<sup>th</sup> Quentin Dale

9<sup>th</sup> Lori Ascher

16<sup>th</sup> Phyllis Aney

19<sup>th</sup> Barb McGreevy

24<sup>th</sup> Joel Tock

25<sup>th</sup> Bob Nichols Jr.

26<sup>th</sup> Melissa Culpitt

28<sup>th</sup> James Davis

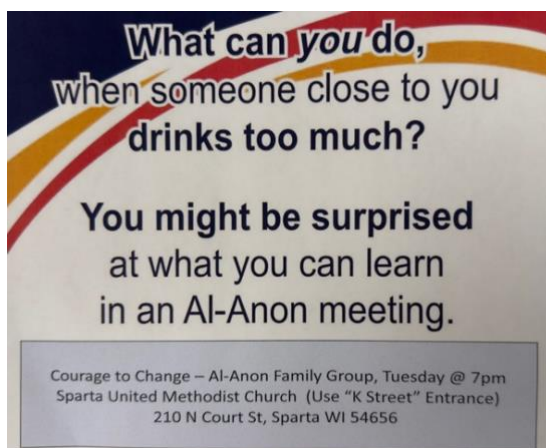
28<sup>th</sup> Julie Hanson

28<sup>th</sup> Jennifer Johnson

30<sup>th</sup> Grenda Rugg

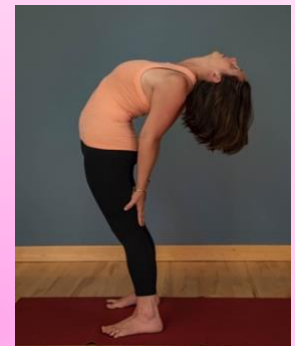
31<sup>st</sup> Brenda Herrman

31<sup>st</sup> Dana Tock



**THANK YOU:** Thank you to Bruce Gee. He was kind enough to send us his grandfather, Reverend R. H. Gee's ministry sermons, from when he was pastor here at Sparta United Methodist Church in the 40s last century.

This will help us celebrate the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our church and will be added to the history room. Very grateful for Bruce's contribution.



## Yoga with Rachel Frazee

Mondays 5:30-6:45pm

Come and check it out

**where?** At Sparta UMC Fellowship Hall  
entrance on "K" St.



Real People.  
Real Weight Loss.®

Weight Support  
group helping each  
other to keep it down

**Mondays 3pm &  
Fridays 9am**

at United Methodist Church Sparta  
"K" Street entrance



**FREE**  
**SOUP SUPPER**  
**TUESDAYS AT 5PM**  
A COMMUNITY MEAL. ALL ARE WELCOME.

**FREE – ALL AGES WELCOME**



**Sparta United Methodist Church,**  
invites you to a time of

• **Rest** • **Renewal** • **Reconnection**  
as we cross Bridges of Hope and Grace for

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**  
Coffee & Baked Goods  
**March 8th, 2026**

Immediately following the 9:00 a.m. Service

**Guest speaker will be**

**Yoga Instructor Rachel Frazee,**

*optional:* Wear comfortable clothes and shoes if you'd like to try  
few gentle yoga poses



Please write on  
clip board at the  
gathering place,  
hymn. We will use

as many as we can to insert it on  
our Sundays Services from  
March to October.

Do you have pictures from our  
Church, send it to the office we  
can scan and return it to you to  
design our photos gallery  
Celebrating 175 years of God's  
grace and blessings

## LENT AT SPART UMC

Tuesdays 6pm **Lent Devotion** - Chapel

March 29. 2026 **Palm Sunday Service**  
9am,

April 1, **Last Supper Presentation**  
Marshfield Wesley UMC Confirmands  
trip - want to join us,  
let Betsy Tadich or pastor Lourdes  
know, please.

April 2, Maundy Thursday Service  
6pm - Sanctuary

April 3 **Good Friday "Indoor Stations to  
the Cross"** - Chapel, 11 am - 2pm

**Easter Service with Holy Communion -**  
**Come, bring your family and friends to**  
**celebrate the risen God.**

## EASTER FLOWERS



**Please Bring it to Church**

**April 1 - 3 to decorate our altar and please take it with you after the  
Easter Service. Let the office know the names you are honoring for your  
Easter vases. you can also help supporting financially the Cross flowers  
we do to keep our tradition of blessings our community as we display our  
cross at the front of our Church on the post Easter Sunday.**

**Alleluia he is risen in deed in my heart, in your heart in our Church.**

**Ministerial Association**

**Ecumenical**

**Luncheon and Lent Prayer**

March 4, St Patrick - Father Eric  
(Maureen)

March 11, UCC - Pastor Priscilla

March 18, E Free - Pastor Brian

March 25, Trinity - Pastor Joshua

April 3, **Good Friday** 9am Ecumenical

Outdoor Stations of the Cross

10am Service at Lanham-Schanhofer F. Home



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Morrow Home Community



"A Christian Tradition Of Caring"





Sparta United Methodist Church - 210 North Court St. Sparta, WI 546756

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Reverend Lourdes Magalhães

## March Calendar, 2026

| Sunday                                                                                | Monday                                                                                   | Tuesday                                                                                   | Wednesday                                             | Thursday                                                 | Friday                                                                                  | Saturday                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1<br>9 am Worship<br>Service Chancel<br>Choir                                         | 2<br>9 am Free Bread; K St.<br>Entrance<br>3 pm TOP'S; Gard Rm<br>5:30pm Yoga; F. H      | 3<br>5pm Soup Supper<br>6 pm SLB mtg.<br>7pm AI-Anon; Gard Rm                             | 4<br>7 Choir Rehearsal                                | 5<br>2pm Bible Study<br>6 pm Nurture                     | 6<br>8am Men's Breakfast<br>8am Women's Breakfast<br>Family Rest<br>9am TOP'S; Gard RM  | 7                                     |
| 8<br><b>International<br/>Woman's Day</b><br>9 am Worship<br>Service Special<br>Music | 9<br>9 am Free Bread;<br>"K" St. Entrance<br>3 pm TOP'S; Gard RM<br>5:30 Yoga Class; F.H | 10<br>1 pm Lois Circle<br>5 pm Soup Supper<br>6:30 Wesleyan Clr.<br>7 pm AI-Anon; Gard Rm | 11<br>1pm Records &<br>History<br>7pm Choir Rehearsal | 12<br>10:30 Communion;<br>Morrow Home<br>2pm Bible Study | 13<br>8am Men's Breakfast<br>8am Women's Breakfast<br>Family Rest<br>9am TOP'S; Gard Rm | 14                                    |
| 15<br>9 am Worship<br>Service Chancel<br>Choir                                        | 16<br>9 am Free Bread;<br>"K" St. Entrance<br>3 pm TOP'S; Gard Rm<br>5:30pm Yoga; F.H    | 17<br><b>St. Patrick's Day</b><br>5 pm Soup Supper<br>7 pm AI-Anon; Gard Rm               | 18<br>5 pm Confirmation<br>7pm Choir Rehearsal        | 19<br>2pm Bible Study<br>5:30 Open Public Mtg<br>F.H     | 20<br>8am Men's Breakfast<br>8am Women's Breakfast<br>Family Rest<br>9am TOP'S; Gard Rm | 21<br>6pm Pizza &<br>Movie Night; TBA |
| 22<br>9 am Worship<br>Service<br>Contemporary<br>Band                                 | 23<br>9 am Free Bread;<br>"K" St. Entrance<br>3 pm TOP'S; Gard Rm<br>5:30pm Yoga; F.H    | 24<br>5 pm Soup Supper<br>7 pm AI-Anon; Gard RM                                           | 25<br>7pm Choir Rehearsal                             | 26<br>2pm Bible Study                                    | 27<br>8am Men's Breakfast<br>8am Women's Breakfast<br>Family Rest<br>9am TOP'S; Gard Rm | 8                                     |
| 29<br>9 am Worship<br>Service Chancel<br>Choir                                        | 30<br>9 am Free Bread;<br>"K" St. Entrance<br>3 pm TOP'S; Gard R<br>5:30pm Yoga; F.H     | 31<br>Kiwanis Lunch<br>5 pm Soup Supper<br>7 pm AI-Anon; Gard RM                          |                                                       |                                                          |                                                                                         |                                       |

# The Chimes

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



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

*Prepared Especially For:*

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## **SUMC WORSHIP SCHEDULES**

**SUNDAYS 9am** In Person

9am Online livestream @ Youtube & Facebook

Spartaumc - *month - day - year*

