

# “The CHIMES” – September

Volume 57, No. 9

2022

## Continuing the Conversation...

*“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.” (Romans 12:3-5)*

*“When the church lost its Jesus-focus, it lost its self-confidence. And when the church lost its self-confidence, it began to ape business models, modes and metrics.” (Leonard Sweet, Theologian, Pastor, Teacher, Author)*

As the page turns on another calendar month, we as the church, are preparing to resume some of our ministries that were on summer break. I am looking forward to beginning a new confirmation class with four students. We will be meeting on Wednesday evenings as we share a meal together and learn some fundamentals of Methodism and deepen our understanding of what it means to be a Christian and a member of a United Methodist Church.



Sunday school classes will also be starting again on Sunday mornings. If you have children in K-5<sup>th</sup> grade and haven't received an invitation from the church, please contact the church office so a registration form can be sent to your family.

Two new Bible studies will also be offered starting this month. I will be offering a study on the book of Acts on Monday afternoons at 1 p.m. and Paul Foulke will offer a discussion of the Lord's Prayer on Thursday evenings. You can find more information on both of these studies in this edition of *Chimes*.

Charge Conference season is also upon us, which means the Servant Leadership Board will be looking for some new members to join us in 2023. In the “Guiding Principles” that were set up and approved by our

previous ad council and the first Servant Leadership board, members of the board commit to serving for three years.

We are being very mindful of this term limit because it is important to expand our leadership horizons and also not to burn anyone out. Of course, we have had some of our initial board members that had to step down for various reasons and were then replaced. This year we have at least three open positions to fill, one of them will also serve as chair of the finance committee.

If you are asked to serve, please prayerfully consider doing so. You are all part of this body of Christ known as the Sparta United Methodist Church. If you are interested in serving on the board or in knowing more about how we function, please contact one of the current members or me. We do not want to leave anyone out who may be feeling called to serve on the Servant Leadership Board of this church.

As the Apostle Paul taught, “*we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.*” We are in this together folks and we need each other.

Serving and leading in Christ's love!  
Pastor L



## Breakthrough Prayer

*“What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open...See, I have placed before you an open door.” —Revelation 3:7-8*

God of love and power, we know that you are with us and you are for us. Breakthrough into our lives and into your church that our relationship may flourish with you and each other.

Fill us with the grace, mercy, and power of Jesus. Help us discern where your Spirit is leading. Open doors that lead us into a new season of faithfulness and fruitfulness; of growth and service for your Kingdom; exceeding our dreams and expectations. Give us faith and courage to step through the doors that you open as we faithfully follow you, in Jesus name and for your glory. Amen.

## 5 Stewardship Lessons from a Homecoming

By Ken Sloane, Director of Stewardship & Generosity for Discipleship Ministries of The United Methodist Church

While traveling earlier this year, I had the opportunity to worship at the church where I grew up. It was where I was in Sunday school in the 1960s and UMYF in the '70s, where I was part of a confirmation class, and where my family was involved in church musicals. When I got my call to ministry, this church was where I was approved as a candidate by the staff-parish relations committee. While I moved away to ministry in another conference, my parents were active here until their deaths. This is where their lives were celebrated – the most recent was my mom's funeral in 2006.

As I drove to the church, I began to think about the impact it had on my family growing up and, on my life, particularly. I realized I had not financially supported that church since my folks were gone (I never receive any communication from them), and I wished I had thought of making a large gift.

I pulled into the parking lot a bit early – the facility and grounds looked good. I entered the church and walked past some folks, but no one spoke to me. There were no greeters or ushers in the narthex, but there were bulletins on a table, so I picked one up and found myself a seat. Again, no one said a word to me as I waited for worship to start. It had been sixteen years since I had been in this sanctuary, so not being recognized as a “family member” was totally understandable – but I expected to be greeted as a guest. If someone had asked my name, there might have been some recognition, but that never happened.

I read through the bulletin and noticed that the offering and doxology were the last items in the order of worship – just before the postlude. I looked to see if there were any provisions for giving electronically, but saw no mention, so I dug in my pockets for what cash I had. When that time came, the organ played the doxology, and an usher walked from the back of the church up the aisle without stopping and presented the plate to the pastor. I guessed there had been some adaptations due to COVID—maybe offerings were to be left in the narthex—but nothing was said about it. At the close of the service, no one came up to me except one woman who said softly as she walked by, “There is coffee in the fellowship hall.” I walked out of the sanctuary, shook hands with the pastor, who never asked me who I was, and went straight to the car. I drove

away, sad that this would probably be the last visit to a congregation which had been an important part of my life.

So, what are the lessons from my homecoming visit?

**1. Expect guests every Sunday** When I was growing up in that church, it wasn't unusual to have two hundred or three hundred in worship. On the day I attended, there were about thirty people. There's probably an assortment of reasons for that change, many of which are out of the congregation's control. Yet it was clear to me during my visit that the church wasn't expecting guests. There was nothing in the bulletin to help guests understand the service if they were new to the church. There was no instruction about the offering being received in the back, and there was no envelope in the pew rack for people to include a gift. When a visitor did come, the church was unprepared; and when there is no expectation for guests, you seldom get a second chance.

**2. Everyone needs a welcome** When I was a local church pastor, there was talk in the church about how guests didn't like to be recognized or engaged. I understand how the practice of asking guests to stand and introduce themselves in the service can create anxiety for many. Yet I think anyone who comes to your church needs to be welcomed by somebody – not necessarily in a public way but in a personal way. The story of my experience at my home church would have been dramatically different if someone had stopped by my seat before the service and said something: “Good morning! Good to see you. Have you worshiped with us before?” It might also have opened the door to financial support I hadn't considered before.

**3. Having more ways to give is better than one way (or none)** When I came into my stewardship position more than a decade ago, I quickly realized the responsibility I had of encouraging churches to offer electronic giving options to their congregations. Money had already gone digital: more and more people were paying their bills online and fewer and fewer were writing checks or carrying cash. Money was going through dramatic changes, and many churches were still offering just one way to give. In some places, it took a pandemic and a complete shutdown to get churches to see the value of electronic giving. In the case of my homecoming visit, it meant the loss not only of a gift (I would have made my gift before I missed out on the passing of the plate), but possibly an ongoing donor.

**4. Maintaining connections is important** I often think churches are too quick to end relationships with

members and constituents who move away. There was a time when we worked hard to keep our mailing lists up to date to save on printing and postage, but in a day of emailed newsletters, it costs nothing to maintain those connections. In a relatively short period in my home church, there were five people—two adults and three young adults—who answered God’s call to full-time ordained ministry. Additionally, I’m sure there were many families whose faith became deeply rooted and was nurtured by this church before circumstances had them move away. Maintaining these connections, though requiring a little extra work, could have provided this church with a spiritual and financial boost.

**5. Stewardship is all about relationship** I’ve been preaching this since I started my work in stewardship. Some of you reading may think that some of these observations are more relevant for the membership secretary, the worship committee, or some other group in the church. Don’t be mistaken by thinking that our responsibilities are only budgets and bills – funding mission and ministry is built on building and maintaining relationships. When someone visits your church, the possibility of becoming a supporter of your mission or even making a second visit will depend on whether that person is offered the seed for a growing relationship.



I want to **thank everyone** for the prayers, get well wishes and cards sent to me after my fall. I feel so much better. Barb McGreevy"

Our sincere **thank you** to everyone for all your prayers, cards, calls, emails, and visits during the loss of my mother. We are blessed and very grateful to have such a wonderful church family.  
Love, John and Diane Noonan

**Thank you!** The Little Free Library has been bursting at the seams. Thank you, everyone for keeping it well stocked.  
Margie Lakowske - Little Free Library Steward

**Thank-you** so much to the UMW for the beautiful plant for our 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary. Tom & Ellen Hemstock

## The Lord’s Prayer

**The meaning and power of the prayer Jesus taught.** Have you ever wanted to explore further, this prayer that we know by heart and say every Sunday (often without giving it much thought)? Well, here is your opportunity, beginning Thursday, September 15 at 6 p.m.

We will begin our journey with a video by Adam Hamilton. Themes we will explore and discuss include:

1. Our Father who art in Heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name.
2. Whose will be done.
3. Our daily bread.
4. Forgiveness.
5. Lead us not into temptation.
6. For thine is the kingdom the power and the glory.

There is also a book that goes with the video which costs \$15. We will meet in the large **classroom #5**. If this topic interests you and you want to participate, let Paul Foulke know by September 4.



## Monday Afternoon Bible Study

Beginning **Monday, September 26 at 1 p.m.** the Monday afternoon Bible study will resume. This time around, we will be tackling the book of **Acts**. You do not need to be a Bible scholar to participate in this study; all you need is a Bible, curiosity, and willingness to learn and join the discussion.

Most scholars agree that Luke, the Gospel writer and physician, who joined Paul on some of his journeys, likely wrote Acts. In 30 short years, the church grew from what was considered an insignificant Jewish sect to a major force in the Roman Empire. Luke wrote Acts as a companion piece to his Gospel to show how Christianity was not a political threat to Rome, but rather the work of God’s Spirit in building up a spiritual “kingdom,” one comprised of all who live by faith in Jesus. Luke does this by focusing on the two leading figures in the church: Peter, the apostle to the Jews and Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

We will plan to meet in the church library unless we end up needing more space. There is no set timeline for this study; we will be done when we get through the end of Acts.

## Nurture Update...



**September**—a time to reflect on the easy going days of summer! But...then we shift our thoughts to renewed energy, new ideas, productive plans and programming and meaningful relationships with each other and with our community.

**September 11**—BASH begins. Children ages 3 years to 6<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to join their parents in the sanctuary at 9 a.m. for Pastor Loretta's children's message then they will go to their classrooms.

**Confirmation classes** will be led by Pastor Loretta. There is more information in the *Chimes*.

**Bible Studies** will be led by Pastor Loretta and Paul Foulke. There is more information in the *Chimes*.

**Coffee Fellowship time**—September 4 and will continue the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month, IF volunteers come forward to serve and bake. Some “bakers” are willing, but we need servers. Let Cyndi know if you're interested please.

**Leisure Time Groups** are encouraged to gather. Please check out the posters in the Gathering Place to look for your shared interest.

**SUMMIT Spirits** are planning a December show, “It's a Wonderful Life,” with a tea event in the Fellowship Hall. More details coming.

**Community Thanksgiving Dinner** will once again be held in November. Evangelical Free Church will organize volunteers. “Stay connected to God—Stay connected to others.”



There will not be a **Pizza and a movie** this month. We will be returning on October 15



**Thank you** to all who have donated to Soles4Souls! We have collected 1,198 pair of shoes through August!

CHANGING THE WORLD  
ONE PAIR AT A TIME

## Records and History Committee



**Help wanted:** Anyone interested in helping to clean the Gathering Place, Sanctuary and Family Room please join the Records and History Committee on

**Wednesday, October 12th at 9:00 a.m.** Many hands make light work. We are deep cleaning in preparation for **Our Community In Concert** which we hope you will all attend on Saturday, October 22nd at 2:00 p.m.

**Reminder:** Records and History is sponsoring *Our Community In Concert* on **Saturday, October 22nd from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.** We have not been able to host this ecumenical concert for two years and we promise you will be glad you took the time to attend. Please invite your family, friends and neighbors. This is a **FREE** event - open to our community. Come listen to our talented friends and neighbors perform in our lovely Sanctuary. Refreshments to follow.

**Help wanted:** If you have some extra time prior to the concert on October 22nd (1:30 p.m.) would you consider ushering or running the elevator? If so, please contact Margie Lakowske at 608-633-3588. If your call goes to voicemail, please leave a message and I will return your call. My phone is not always user friendly and sends calls to voicemail, so I have to retrieve messages later. Thank you for considering helping with this event.

## We are—Keeping the Eternal Flame Glowing



## 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 [facebook.com/umcsparta](https://facebook.com/umcsparta). Once you are there just “like” the site and you will receive updates when new information is posted.



## Confirmation Classes to begin in September

Confirmation classes start on Wednesday, September 7 at 5 p.m. Pastor and the confirmands will enjoy a brown bag supper as we learn. Each confirmand will be required to find a mentor of the same gender to go through this confirmation process. If you are asked to be a mentor, please prayerfully consider saying yes; if you are asked that means that student looks up to you as a Christian in this church.

I am planning a one-year confirmation program. One thing I have learned from the pandemic is to not try and plan anything out too far in advance. If there is anyone who might be interested in helping with classes or other activities from time-to-time, please let me know. I think I have a good and easy-to-use curriculum this year. My hope is that we will have a full year of learning, growing in our faith, and having fun in the process.

Confirmation is an opportunity for young people to affirm the faith into which they were baptized and, for those who were baptized as infants or small children, to renew the baptismal vows taken for them by their parents or guardians. For those who have not been baptized, they will be baptized as part of the confirmation service.

Confirmation also makes young people aware of how God is and has been at work in their lives, even before they were old enough to realize it. And confirmation affirms a new commitment—a new covenant relationship—between a young person and Christ's body, the church as they become members of the church.

The confirmation program is grounded in these three core principles:

- Confirmation is the continuation of one's faith journey (a journey begun at baptism) and the beginning of one's covenant relationship with the church—it is not graduation from church school but the beginning of a new and more mature faith life.
- Confirmation is more than just a series of classes. Confirmands must be fully engaged in the life of the church through worship, service,

small groups, and involvement in other ministries.

- Confirmands should emerge from their confirmation experience prepared for a life of continued Christian discipleship.

### Confirmation Goals Include:

- Teach confirmands the story of their faith, as contained in the Old and New Testaments and in the history and traditions of Christianity and The United Methodist Church.
- Give confirmands a basic understanding of Christian theology, including the doctrine of the Trinity, creation, sin, and grace.
- Teach confirmands the traditions and doctrinal emphases that make United Methodism unique.
- Foster relationships between confirmands and Christian adults in the congregation who can set an example of how to live as a mature Christian.
- Give confirmands an understanding of the importance of Christian education as a lifelong endeavor, and help confirmands develop a habit of participating in Christian education.
- Give confirmands an understanding of Christian worship as practiced in The United Methodist Church and why worship is an essential part of Christian discipleship.
- Challenge confirmands to serve God and others through the life and ministry of the congregation.
- Give confirmands an opportunity to participate in Christian mission and ministry beyond the local church.
- Teach confirmands about the vows they will have an opportunity to take and the commitments that one makes when one says yes to those vows.

If you have any questions about the confirmation process or would like to sit in or help with classes or activities please let me know. —Pastor L



**We have a new web site domain so it is easier to find our site.**

**It is: *spartaumc.net*. Check it out if you haven't lately.**

## Altar Plants



United Women in Faith (UWIF) would like to thank all those who signed up for one or more plants on one or multiple dates for 2022. Each date has two lines for one plant per line. Plants are \$5.50 each or two for \$11.00. Plant money goes to Eileen Gajewsky, UWIF treasurer, who pays the invoice from Sparta Floral quarterly.

These dates are still open to honor, remember or celebrate: Sept. 11 & 18. 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 UWIF,  
Cathy Nichols



## 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 **September 11**. 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.



## National Volunteers in Mission Fall Opportunity

**October 16-22, 2022 – Poverty/Homeless Assistance, Detroit, MI – Cass Community**  
Cass Community Social Services works across the city in areas of concentrated poverty providing programs for food, health, housing and jobs. This is a dynamic organization serving on the front line of the poverty relief effort in this very needy community.

CCSS prepares and serves 1 million meals annually. 325 homeless men, women, and children currently stay in one of CCSS shelters, transitional housing or permanent supportive housing programs.

CCSS operates a weekly free medical clinic and a day program for 100 adults with developmental disabilities. 70 adults are currently employed in the agency's Green Industries which marry jobs with sustainability.

They would like us to help repair their buildings and get them ready for inspection. We will be painting, patching, cleaning etc., in ten of their buildings. We will be sleeping in the Cass United Methodist Church on our air mattresses. Showers are available.

Cost is \$175. This is a drive to trip. Checks made out to: WAC/VIM. A deposit for registration is \$100 and should be sent to the registrar by the **deadline** for registration which is **October 6, 2022**.

**Co – leader** – Jeff Cupery, 100 La Crosse St, Beaver Dam, WI 53916; Ph: 920-887-8726; Email: [jscupery1@charter.net](mailto:jscupery1@charter.net); (Cell:920-318-9513)

**Registrar** – Tom Andres, E12836 Wynding Way, Merrimac, WI, 53561; Ph: 608-345-1368  
E-mail: [tamerrimac@gmail.com](mailto:tamerrimac@gmail.com)





## September Anniversaries

- 03 Carolyn & Kevin Lieder
- 09 Jane & Duane Hobson
- 14 Sara & Elliot Blackdeer
- 15 Carson & Mindy Wiedemann
- 17 Julie & Dennis Hanson
- 17 Ron & Kristine Phillips
- 30 Scott & Kelly Lakowske

## September Birthdays

- 01 Addison Alvarado
- 01 Ace Girard
- 02 Mary Borreson
- 02 Ann Olson
- 03 Amy Kiefer
- 06 Sue Harrie
- 08 Judy Fuhrmann
- 10 Jean Evans
- 10 Marcia Knoll
- 10 Dave Wiedemann
- 11 Grace Johnson
- 12 Allen Erickson
- 12 Maxine Gudbaur
- 15 Damijon Talsky
- 18 Yvonne Chamberlain
- 18 Kevin Eddy
- 20 Wayne Johnson
- 21 Emmersyn Alvarado
- 21 Lisa Arvizu
- 21 Gail Clark
- 22 Chuck Adams
- 23 Kevin Lieder
- 27 Teresa Brown
- 27 Laurie Hesselberg
- 28 Chris Angle
- 28 Sherry Breeser
- 28 Cyndi Wise
- 30 Mindy Wiedemann



## September Schedules

### September 4

**Ushers:** Bob & Cathy  
**Recording:** Ben & Hailee  
**Liturgist:** Marty Walley  
**Bread Pick up:** Paul Foulke

### September 11

**Ushers:** Kurt & Amy  
**Recording:** Ron & Kristine  
**Liturgist:** Judy Fuhrmann  
**Bread Pick up:** Pat & Gail Clark

### September 18

**Ushers:** Peggy & Donna  
**Recording:** Toni & Amy  
**Liturgist:** Paul Foulke  
**Bread Pick up:** Donna Burnhamm

### September 25

**Ushers:** John & Karen  
**Recording:** Cheryl & Cindy  
**Liturgist:** Beth Nowak  
**Bread Pick up:** Judy Fuhrmann



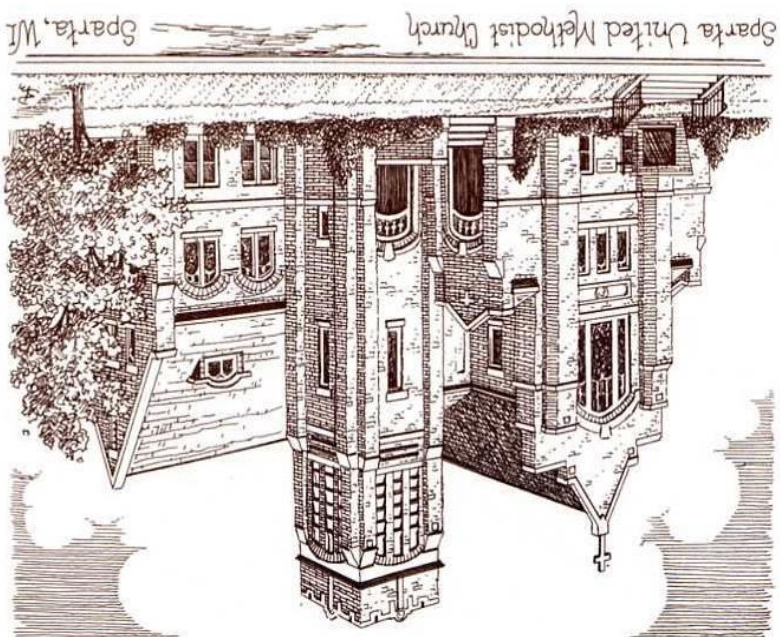
# The Chimes

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



*Prepared Especially For:*



**Pastor:** Rev. Loretta Waughal

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**Phone:** (608)269-6949

**Fax:** (608)269-6940

**Email:** [office@spartamethodist.com](mailto:office@spartamethodist.com)

**Website:** [www.spartaumc.net](http://www.spartaumc.net)

**SUMC Worship Schedule**

**In-house Service**

9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings

**Online Service**

YouTube: Sparta UMC month day year