

“The CHIMES” – October

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2019

Continuing the Conversation...

Jesus said, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.’ This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’ These two commands are pegs; everything in God’s Law and the Prophets hangs from them.”

—Matthew 22:37-39 (The Message)

Jesus went right ahead and gave his charge: “God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.”

—Matthew 28:18-20 (The Message)

As I prepare to turn my calendar to October I am finding that as summer comes to a close, my days are already filling up quickly—not that my summer days were empty. There was a definite shift in our activities starting in September that coincides with children going back to school and some of our young adults heading back to college. We can get very busy very fast.



At times like this, before we are in full-throttle speeding ahead mode, it is good to take some time to examine our church activities to determine if they are just filling time or if they are helping us to fulfill our purpose and mission as a church.

As I consider my quickly filling calendar I recalled the wisdom of a School for Ministry speaker a couple of years ago. The speaker, Tim Bias, helped my thought process along these lines as he guided the pastors in attendance back to the basics of being church by pointing out several paragraphs in our *United Methodist Book of Discipline* pertaining to the Mission and Ministry of the Church and then asking us to discuss some simple, but thoughtful questions.

I want to share some of this information with you here as we prepare for our annual church conference and planning for our future as a “vital” congregation.

In paragraph 120 in our Book of Discipline we read that the mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. That shouldn’t come as a big surprise since we have the opportunity to read those words every week before worship on the front of our bulletins. We are further reminded in this short paragraph, “Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple making occurs.”

Disciple might be one of those churchy words that we hear and tune out without really thinking about what it means. So, for our purposes here, a disciple is a grace-filled Christ follower who puts faith into action

By grace I mean the undeserved favor and love of God that we cannot earn, that is always at work in our lives, and that we receive as a free gift. By grace-filled I mean knowing and accepting the favor and love of God working in our lives and offering it freely to all others.

The Book of Discipline then offers a Process for Carrying Out Our Mission (P 122) stating, “We make disciples as we:

- proclaim the gospel, seek, welcome and gather persons into the body of Christ; (**H**ospitality)
- lead persons to commit their lives to God through baptism by water and the spirit and profession of faith in Jesus Christ; (**O**ffer Christ)
- nurture persons in Christian living through worship, the sacraments, spiritual disciplines, and other means of grace, such as Wesley’s Christian conferencing; (**P**urpose)
- send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, freeing the oppressed, being and becoming a compassionate, caring presence, and working to develop social structures that are consistent with the gospel; (**E**ngage) and
- continue the mission of seeking, welcoming and gathering persons into community of the body of Christ. (repeat)

If you like acronyms, here’s the shorthand for the process we are called to use in carrying out our mission: **H**ospitality, **O**ffer Christ, **P**urpose, **E**ngage (see above). So we could say we are called to offer **HOPE**. A church that fulfills the mission of making maturing disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by

engaging this **HOPE** process is a good definition of a vital church.

As I consider our local church I can say without hesitation that we are a vital congregation. Does that mean we are done? We are good with where we are? NO! Becoming a vital congregation is not a destination that we finally arrive at; it is a journey we are on together in an ever-changing world. We can't decide we are fine just the way we are and expect to remain vital and purposeful.

It is extremely important to keep asking things like: Why do we do what we do? How is it helping to shape grace-filled followers of Christ? How might our church partner with other local organizations in our community to show the love of God? What do we need to do in our community that no one else is doing? Who are people who need us to show them the care and love of God through our actions? What will you do as a disciple so you can show others Jesus in your every-day life?

I leave you with these questions in hope of starting and continuing conversations that will lead to actions that will keep us a vital church making a positive difference in our community and the world. As part of this work we are in the process of exploring a new leadership model for our church—**Accountable Leadership**. This model has the potential for making better use of our human resources (fewer meetings, more efficient decision making) while still carrying on the important God-given ministries we do. **Please plan to come to the Accountable Leadership training here in our fellowship hall on Saturday morning October 5, and bring your questions.** We all need to understand well and agree on this move, we don't want to make this change lightly.

God bless you as you seek to know and love God fully!
Pastor Loretta

are a Packer fan, no worries; the Packers have a night game and don't play until 7 p.m.

Please note: All forms for the charge conference booklet must be in to Pastor Loretta by **October 6** so she can input the information on the online forms and submit them. **Also, all committee reports for the charge conference booklet need to be in by the same date, October 6.** So if you are a committee chair please be working on your reports and get them submitted to Pastor Loretta. These reports are an important part of our history and become part of our historical records. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Loretta.

Accountable Leadership Training

The Ad Council has been discussing moving from our current leadership structure of committees and Ad Council to the Accountable Leadership structure. This new model of leadership would cut down on the number of committees and meetings and make doing the administrative business of the church more efficient.

To make this change we first have to go through training and then get permission from the conference if we decide we truly want to go this route.

In an effort to complete that first step (and as a follow-up to our January leadership retreat) an **Accountable Leadership training** has been scheduled for **Saturday, October 5 with coffee at 9:30 a.m. and the workshop from 10–noon** in the church dining room with Rev. Richard Jones. Anyone is invited and encouraged to attend this training, but if you are currently serving on a committee you really need to attend so we can make an informed decision together about the best way for us to move forward.

For a full report on the Administrative Council business, see the minutes posted on the bulletin board.



FRIENDLY SMILES NEEDED:

The Records and History Committee is sponsoring the third Annual “Our Community In Concert” event on **Saturday, October 19 from 2-4:00 p.m.** We are in need of two people to “man or woman” the elevators **from 1:30 p.m. until time of the concert (2 p.m.) and then after the serving of refreshments (4-ish).** We also need **two people to serve as ushers (handing out programs) for the concert (1:30-2 p.m.).** Only requirement for these two tasks is a **SMILE!**

If you would be interested in helping us extend our SUMC hospitality to the community in these very important ways, please contact Margie Lakowske at 269-5532. Thank you!



Administrative business...

Ad Council meeting time change

Beginning this month our regular Ad Council meeting time will be the **third Thursday of the month at 6 p.m.** Our next meeting will be on **October 17 at 6 p.m.** If you are in a leadership role (committee member) or are just interested in the working of our church, please plan to attend.

2019 Charge Conference

Our charge conference this year will take place on **Sunday, October 27 with a potluck brunch immediately following worship** and then the charge conference. This year the conference will be facilitated by Pastor Krysta Deede from Tomah First UMC. If you

Congregational Connections...

This month we are back, featuring some members and friends of Sparta UMC. I appreciate their willingness to share here and keep our connection alive and well. Please consider sharing your story here to help keep us all connected, pastor has a helpful form with questions to guide you.

Beverly Benedict Laufenberg has been attending the United Methodist Church in Sparta since she learned to walk. She was married for 46 years.

Some of Bev's personal interests include: doing things with her family and she loves sports, possibly because she was brought up with five brothers, who were all athletes. Bev enjoys people. She has been a caregiver all of her life and loved being able to do it.

Church activities she participates in include being a member of UMW and Lois Circle; she was UMW president for several years. Bev is currently a member of the Health Ministry Team and a member of the church membership committee.

Bev keeps coming to this church because she loves it. She has so many wonderful memories of her life in this Methodist Church that she can't begin to list them all.

But, some favorite memories from church are: Ruth Hering playing the organ. Bev started Sunday School when she was three years old and says she had the most wonderful teachers. Her third grade teacher gave Bev her first dog, which she had for 13 years. Bev sang in the Chancel Choir starting in high school and continued until she retired when her husband had to give it up due to bad health.

Clarice Button became a member of Sparta UMC in 1975. She was married for 51 ½ years.

Some of Clarice's personal interests include: knitting, crocheting, and writing about her family history. She also enjoys reading, watching Brewers games (which she tries not to miss), and spending time with her family when possible.

Church activities Clarice participated in included: baking for Christmas sales, helping in the kitchen at times, serving when asked. She is no longer physically able to get around without her walker, but has always contributed financially as she is able.

Some of Clarice's favorite memories are the singing, especially the children's programs at Christmas, and meeting friends. She enjoyed the sermons (before she lost the ability to hear well). She also enjoyed the Thanksgiving dinners.



Roof Project Matching Funds Progress

We continue to make progress toward meeting the matching gift for the work that needs to be done on the outside of the church. As of Sunday, September 22 we are at \$10,710.

Please be in prayer for our church, the construction workers, and our future as we move forward with this important work. **Prayerfully consider how you can support the project while continuing your regular financial support of the ministries of this church.** With all of us doing our part and working together we will be successful in raising the remaining \$7,290 (and then some, to begin an ongoing maintenance fund for the continued care of our properties).

Please designate your extra gift for this project to:
"church roof/trustees".

Sparta United Methodist Church Mission Statement:

We are called to make maturing disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

HELPING HANDS NEEDED:

Anyone interested in helping to do a little Fall cleaning of the Sanctuary, The Gathering Place, and the Family Room...please come to the church on **Wednesday, October 9 at 9:30 am.** We will do light housekeeping to prepare for "Our Community In Concert". Remember, many hands make light work! Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Records and History Committee,

We Are - Keeping the Eternal Flame Glowing

The Virtue of Giving...

"In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35)

I recently came across a quotation by David Starr Jordan, founding President of Stanford University: "Wisdom is knowing what to do next; Skill is knowing how to do it, and Virtue is doing it." It caused me to think about how this applies to generosity.

Knowing That I Should Give: God calls us all to worship God and support the church. Stewardship is faithful management of all God gives us so that God can use our gifts to transform us spiritually and extend Christ's transforming love to others. We are told in Scripture that "God loves a cheerful giver" and that "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Knowing How to Determine What I Should Give: Scripture informs us to love God and love others. Thus, we should divide our giving between the two. The amount to give to God through the church is the tithe, ten percent of our income. In order to reach the tithe, we should prayerfully consider what proportion of income to give, then strive to increase toward the goal of tithing, usually by about one percent of income per year. Although some of our tithe will go to the needy, we should consider another proportion of income to give to those in need.

The Virtue of Giving: The real issue is not whether we give 10%, but what we will do with the entire 100%. John Wesley believed in the spiritual discipline summed up as "earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can." Wesley believed that after earning money honestly and spending only what we need on our families and ourselves, we should give the rest away. Surely, using this approach, he would anticipate that our giving would be much more than the tithe of ten percent. His was.

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation
www.wumf.org or Facebook/wumf.org
Or call 1-888-903-9863

Nurture Committee News...

Sunday, October 20th: Now is the time to start gathering your submissions for our Advent devotional booklet. The **DEADLINE** for submitting prayers, stories, poems, songs, Bible verses, etc...**will be Sunday, November 17th.** Please leave the items you would like included in the devotional booklet in the Church office or give them to Cyndi Wise.

Sunday, October 27th: Our annual Charge Conference has been scheduled for this date, so a **Potluck Brunch** will be enjoyed immediately following worship that day. Bring a favorite breakfast or lunch dish to share and enjoy the wonderful fellowship of this meal with your extended church family. The Charge Conference will begin following brunch, so plan to participate in this important annual meeting and the decision making that is a part of it, too.

"Stay connected to God – stay connected to others."

Thank You to our 4 new Soup Supper volunteers: Donna Burnham, Kathy Ekern, Ron and Kristine Phillips. What wonderful help you are!

Those currently serving on Soup Supper teams are: Dick and Eileen Gajewsky, Grace Johnson, Jennifer Johnson, Emily Axelsen, Pat Eggers, Jeanine Houtevelde, Priscilla Hemmersbach, Margie Lakowske, Holly Arnold, Linda Dahlby, St. John's Episcopal Church and Faith Evangelical Free Church.

Others who have served include: Katherine Abbott, Ce Stow and Ann Olson. Your labor of love has been sincerely appreciated. Thank You!

Over the past 20 years we have had countless volunteers – you know who you are. Please know how much your generous hearts and willing hands have meant to so many!

Submitted by Cyndi Wise, Nurture Chair

BASH News...

BASH kicked off the school year on September 18, with 18 kids registered from three year olds to sixth graders. We have changed the classes up a little bit this year, with Betsy Tadisch, Jenny Johnson, Margie Lakowske, Donna Burnham and Courtney Goodenough taking the three year olds through second graders. Betsy and Margie will be taking the kindergarteners through second graders after story time and Donna, Jenny, and Courtney will continue with the three and four year olds. Lynn Humphrey and Sara Blackdeer will be teaching the third through sixth graders.

It will be an exciting year, with many new faces, who we pray will discover how much Jesus loves them.

God's Blessings, Lynn Humphrey
BASH Coordinator

Parish Nurse News...

For those of you who do not know, I have been involved in Monroe County jail ministry now for the last month. I am one of the Assistant Chaplains and provide one-on-one sessions with the inmates, Bible Study, and Sunday morning sermons.

Jail Ministry offers inmates opportunities they may never have had. Very few things in the lives of these men and women offer as much hope. Jail Ministry provides people in jail the opportunity to draw strength and guidance through their relationship with God. God works in the life of a person, communities ... why not jail ministry?

There are fewer places darker than a jail/prison cell. There, separated from all that they ever knew or loved, men and women struggle with feelings of despair and hopelessness. As they search for some sense of meaning and purpose for their lives, they wonder if anyone outside the walls of the prison knows or cares about their struggles.

But even in the darkest places, there is Light.

For more than 40 years, Prison Fellowship has been going into correctional facilities, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with those behind bars, and offering the hope of true transformation. Through biblical programming anchored in evidence-based curriculum, and with the help of thousands of committed volunteers, lives are being changed, hope is being restored, and darkness is being replaced with the promise of a future.

I am so humbled to be a part of this amazing ministry.

In Christ, Priscilla Hemmersbach RN, Parish Nurse

Our Deepest Sympathy to...

The family and friends of Robert "Bob" Snow, for the loss of Bob.

The family and friends of Margie Moser (sister of Duane and Jane Hobson), for the loss of Margie.

The family and friends of Keith Kenyon (husband of Carolyn Kenyon), for the loss of Keith.

Directory Updates...

Willard & Linda Pfuhl, 7713 Big Bend Rd, Apt. 101, Waterford, WI 53185. Phone: 608-487-2001

Angel & Todd Loeffelholz no longer have a land line for their phone. Angel's cell phone number is 608-473-5528 and Todd's is 608-473-5529

David & Diane Schultz, 1701 Bernard Ct, Apt 7, Sparta, WI 54656-5418

Congratulations to...

Natalie Peth and Alex Echeverria, who were joined in Holy Matrimony on Saturday, September 14, 2019 by Pastor Loretta Waughtal. Our best wishes for God's richest blessings to rain down on them, their marriage and family in the years to come.

We welcome into our Christian Fellowship through the Sacrament of Baptism:

Tennyson Beatrice Kozelka, daughter of Gabrielle (Larson) and Brady Kozelka. Her sponsors were Victoria Pulcine and Blayne Kozelka.

Medicare Information Session...



The Medicare information session held here on September 25 was attended by 17 people from the community and our congregation. Blia Yang was a wonderful presenter, who is well-versed in the "ins and outs" of Medicare Parts A, B, C, D, and Medicare supplements. She educated those in attendance on terminology, the importance of enrollment timelines, and the need to carefully consider what combination of those Medicare parts will best meet their needs now and into the future. Blia knows this can all be very confusing and people are often overwhelmed by all the information that pours into their mailboxes once they approach age 65. She feels education is key and yet believes most people haven't had an opportunity to learn what they need to know to successfully navigate the Medicare system. Her goal is to change that and is willing to return for another informational session in the future. She also works with people one-on-one to answer any questions and help figure out what will best meet each individual person's needs.