

“The CHIMES” – December

Volume 57, No. 12

2022

Continuing the Conversation...

“The LORD proclaims: Cursed are those who trust in mere humans, who depend on human strength and turn their hearts from the LORD. They will be like a desert shrub that doesn’t know when relief comes. They will live in the parched places of the wilderness, in a barren land where no one survives. Happy are those who trust in the LORD, who rely on the LORD. They will be like trees planted by the streams, whose roots reach down to the water. They won’t fear drought when it comes; their leaves will remain green. They won’t be stressed in the time of drought or fail to bear fruit.” (Jeremiah 17:5-8)



For as long as I can remember, every time we go through an election season those words from Jeremiah come to my mind. I ask myself, “In whom do you trust?”

What a sharp contrast is presented in these verses! It is a contrast between the person who trusts in humanity and the person who trusts in God. It is the contrast between a brown lifeless shrub in the desert and a green fruitful tree planted by waters. It is a contrast between the person who chooses cursing and the person who chooses blessing.

Although the question is not stated by Jeremiah, it is implied: “In whom do you trust?” This question demands a response. Jeremiah writes to the Old Testament people of God, Judah. In the threat posed by the kingdoms of Assyria and Babylon, there were those who trusted in themselves or in the help of the nation of Egypt. These were terrible times and God’s people had to choose.

Do you look to the arm of flesh, or do you look to and trust in God’s mighty arm? We may ask in these current troublesome days the same questions. Do you trust in the economy, politicians, scientists, and government policies? Or do you rest and have confidence in God who is sovereign and does all things well?

How imperfect and weak is the arm of flesh. The economy changes. Politicians can threaten or make promises, neither of which they can likely carry out. Scientists can maybe find a vaccine that works but viruses are always changing. Government policies change from year to year, depending on which party convinces enough people to follow them. The arm of flesh is weak and mortal. When we put our trust in humanity, it is a matter of taking our eyes off of the LORD and putting them instead on our own abilities.

In whom do you trust? God’s word says, “Cursed are those who trust in mere humans.” How dreadful! The person that lives not trusting in God is cursed to live in their own frail power and wisdom. The image is given of a brown shrub in the desert. This shrub never gives any fruit, and even if rain comes, it has no roots to drink it up. What a picture of the person who does not put their trust in God!

The contrast is the child of God who trusts, has saving faith, depends upon the LORD. That person has hope, which means confidence. Why do we have this confidence even in difficult times? The reason is that the LORD is the God of our salvation. God loves us and God’s love endures forever. God will work all things for good to them that love him, who are the called according to his purpose. God has provided for our salvation in his Son, Jesus Christ! Our eyes, our mind, and our heart are to stay focused on him.

The person that trusts in God is compared to a green and fruitful tree. That person is planted by the waters, by God himself. That one is given deep roots, roots that keep on spreading along the stream. Christ Jesus is that water of life. Christ’s life flows to us by the Holy Spirit. When times of trouble come, the person (and the church for that matter) who trusts in God does not shrivel up or become unfruitful. Rather, their roots sink further and deeper into Jesus Christ and his Word. They become stronger. They are not anxious in troubled times. They grow abundantly the fruit of joy and peace. God’s Word says that God blesses those who trust in him! May we proclaim with Jeremiah’s confession as found in vs. 17 of this same chapter, “*you are my refuge in time of disaster.*”

continued

So once more the question comes, "In whom do you trust?" The Psalmist Asaph once doubted and was anxious and despairing. But God led and taught him, and Asaph was able to finally say, "Do I have anyone else in heaven? There's nothing on earth I desire except you...It's good for me to be near God. I have taken my refuge in you, my LORD God, so I can talk all about your works!" (Ps. 73:25,28).

May the trials and difficulties we face in this world cause us to draw closer to our God in Christ Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit to grow in faith and confidence in the one true God.

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



Be Born In Us Today Advent Focus

As we make our way through the season of Advent we are reminded that Christ is born in us spiritually today and every day. He enters into us daily to strengthen and support us, save us and renew us. We are changed by this presence within us as we become more and more like him in the living of our lives.

December 4 ♦ Be Born in Us Today Bringing Renewal (Isaiah 40:31): The prophet Isaiah declared that a Holy One from God would be born into this world to bring renewal to all the faint and weary. Christ's birth restores our strength that we might serve him.

December 11 ♦ Be Born in Us Today Bringing Guidance (Psalm 31:3): The children of Israel wandered in the desert for 40 years, often doubting God's plan for them. With the arrival of Jesus on the scene, we have a clear path to the promised land of heaven through him who is the Way.

December 18 ♦ Be Born in Us Today Bringing Power (Exodus 15:6): John the Baptist pointed to the power of God present in Jesus Christ. As we prepare for the birth of baby Jesus, we point others to the power at work in our lives through our Emmanuel, God with us.

Advent devotional books entitled, "This Will Be A Sign For You" will be available for you at the church courtesy of the nurture ministry team. Be sure to pick up your copy!



Giving Breaks the Temptation of Greed

"The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind." (2 Corinthians 9:6-7a)

Are you 70-1/2 or older? Or do you know someone 70-1/2 or older? If you are, what ministries are you most passionate about? Don't pass up the chance to make a special gift this year!

Don and Sandi always wanted to see a youth minister in place at their church. When they learned they could make a distribution directly to their church from their Traditional IRA to provide the seed money to start this ministry, they decided to tithe their IRA. A few other members of their church joined them in this effort, and now the youth ministry position is funded for the next five years.

The IRA Rollover is a special giving option that is only available to persons 70-1/2 and older. Call your IRA administrator today and request to have your Required Minimum Distribution for 2022 (or a gift of your choice up to a maximum of \$100,000) sent directly to your local church (or other charity). This gift will benefit the ministry you have designated and will NOT be included in your gross income for tax purposes.

What types of IRAs qualify? Only Traditional and Roth IRAs qualify.

Where can I make Qualified Charitable Distributions from my IRA? Only to qualified public charities. All United Methodist Churches and United Methodist Ministries are qualified public charities: UMCOR, any of our Health and Welfare Ministries, UM Camps, or Advance Specials. You may make an outright gift or make a gift that establishes a permanent endowment fund. For more information contact us at:

Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation
750 Windsor Street #305
Sun Prairie, WI 53590-0620888-903-9863 or
wumf@wumf.org



Church Website



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.

Shop with scrip...support your church

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the church through the shop with scrip program. You are truly making a positive difference in our church finances. Thank you Cheryl for continuing to coordinate the scrip program for our church.



The next scrip order will be going in on **December 4**. With the holidays coming soon, you will have one more opportunities to order scrip cards to use as **stocking stuffers, Christmas gifts**, or just to do your own shopping. The extra dates will be **December 18**. You will also have a limited-time opportunity to purchase \$10 cards until December 4 from Amazon, Olive Garden, Outback Steakhouse, Target, and Walmart.

You can get your orders to Cheryl after worship on Sunday mornings or mail your order directly to Cheryl Isensee at: 9262 Festival Avenue, Sparta, WI 54656. If you have questions or need an order form contact Cheryl.

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.



Note from the Financial Secretary

The **deadline** for all donations and contributions to Sparta United Methodist Church for deposit in 2022 to be received is **Wednesday morning, December 28, 2022**. That is the final day Heidi Sullivan, the SUMC financial secretary, will be making a deposit to the bank for 2022.



Put Your Money to Work for the Church

Did you know that when you shop for the holidays (or any time) at smile.amazon.com/ch/39-6026139, AmazonSmile donates to our United Methodist Church?

When you shop on smile.amazon.com the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organizations selected by customers. To take advantage of this opportunity just go to the smile.amazon.com site and put Sparta United Methodist Church into the search area. Several choices will come up (be sure to select the Sparta, WI option). You can go directly to our support page by entering the link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/39-6026139>

You may not think 0.5% sounds like much, but if you combine that amount with the 2.25% earned through Amazon scrip cards it adds up. If enough people take advantage of this opportunity it adds up even faster. What an awesome way to donate free dollars to the church.



Church Facebook Page



Have you checked out the church's Facebook site? 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:

<https://www.facebook.com/UMCsparta/>. Once you are there just "like" the site and you will receive updates when new information is posted.

Confirmation Update

The confirmands have spent time exploring what this confirmation journey is about. They then took a quick trip through church history beginning with the faith of Jesus and ending with a look into the history of this local church. Thank you to Hutch for providing a “Our City Our Church” book for each of the confirmands. They enjoyed looking for familiar faces in the pictures and learning about the history of their church.

We have now begun a unit on “Our Life Together,” which focuses on what makes the practice of United Methodism unique among Protestant denominations. We will explore everything from how our church is organized to how we worship together. This unit also provides an introduction to “The United Methodist Social Principles,” our guide for how to live as United Methodists in our world.

In the midst of all this we will enjoy a meal and movie night at church on Wednesday, December 21. We will watch *The Nativity Story* in the chapel. That means this class time will last longer than our usual one hour, but I look forward to a great evening of food, fellowship, entertainment, and learning. We will then have a break from classes for the Christmas and New Year’s holiday. We will start meeting again at our regular time on Wednesday, January 4.



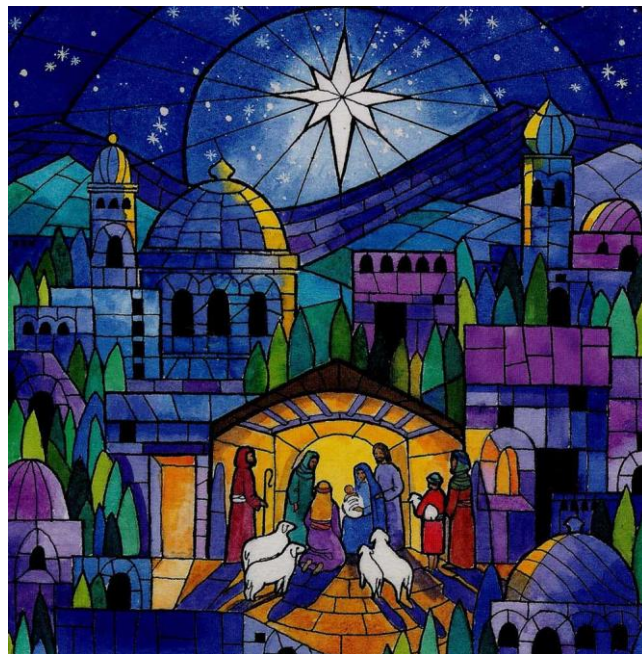
Thank you to all who have donated to Soles4Souls!

We have collected 1819 pair of shoes through December!

CHANGING THE WORLD
ONE PAIR AT A TIME

Two Special Candlelight Services Coming Up this month

A candlelight service of lessons and carols will be held at the **Big Creek Church** at 6 p.m. on Sunday, **December 11**. If you are looking for a quiet break in the midst of a busy holiday season to help you refocus and re-center, this may be just the ticket for you. Everyone is welcome!



Light the Night Christmas Eve

Service of Lessons and Carols

Saturday, December 24 at 4 p.m.

It is such a joy to anticipate once again worshipping on Christmas Eve, hearing the wonderful story of our Saviors birth through Scripture readings and carols. Come and celebrate with joy and anticipation the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ and his continuing revelation in our lives, in this beautiful service of light and sound.

Luminaries are available to purchase in honor or memory of loved ones. An order form is available in worship on Sunday mornings and through the church office.

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people...Luke 2:10



Light the Night Luminaries

“Light the Night” luminaries will be offered this year to honor our loved ones. On Dec 24, these luminaries will light up the Court Street sidewalk while all are inside celebrating Christ’s birth at the Christmas Eve service at 4:00 p.m.

They will be \$5 each or 3 for \$10 and these monies will go to the Ecumenical Food Pantry. Please use the forms provided.

Christ is the light of the world!



Christmas Flowers



With Christmas just around the corner, Sparta Floral is once again willing to provide us with Christmas flowers at a reduced rate. The choices are as follows:

Poinsettias – 4-1/2” pots - \$9.60
6” pots - \$16.00

Color choices: red, pink, white, jingle bells, or marble

Poinsettias – 8” pots - \$35.99
10” pots - \$45.60

Color choices: red & white only

Norfolk Pines – 6” pots - \$17.60
10” pots - \$39.99

Flowers may be given “in honor” or “in memory” of a loved on. For the best chance of reserving the color of your choice, please stop in to the office by noon **December 2**, for a form or get one at Sunday Worship or call the office to let us know your flower choices, colors and who you’re buying them in honor or memory of.

Flowers maybe taken home to enjoy following the **4:00 p.m.** Christmas Eve service.



A Word from Our Financial Chair



The Bible is full of stories and passages about giving and generosity. “Those who are generous are blessed,” says Proverbs 22:9. Acts 20:35 says, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

In 2 Corinthians 8:-7, the apostle Paul challenged the church in Corinth to give generously to mission work. Paul writes that even amid their extreme poverty, the Macedonians give “even beyond their means.” He encourages the Corinthians to give out of their abundance.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism didn’t just talk about being generous he put stewardship of not practice. In his sermon on “The use of money,” he encouraged his followers to earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can. In 1732 he began to limit his expenses so he would have more to give to the poor.

During the season of Advent I encourage you to look at the amount you spend on gifts and consider generous donation of year end giving to the church or toward our Christmas mission projects that benefit local charities.

As you look forward to 2023 ask yourself what are my spending priorities. I invite you to pray about being more generous in your giving toward the ministry of Sparta UMC.

From God loves. God gives. We love. We give. Together we do more.

Thank for your support toward the ministry of Sparta UMC in 2022.

Paul Foulke
Finance Chair





Thank you **Ellen Hemstock** for the books. It is always nice to have a full Little Free Library for people to choose from.

Thank you **John Abbott** for all of the raking you have done around the church and parsonage lawns. The wind was definitely working against you. The lawns look great! Thank you!

Thank you to **Sara Kemp** for the Little Free Library books and for the Christmas items you provided to the Sunday school children. Your generosity is appreciated.

Thank you to **Ce Stow** for donating books to Little Free Library.



LOST/MISSING/STOLEN: If anyone knows of the location of the "sandwich" board (it is white and black and heavy) that we have used for years to advertise various church events please let us know. This sign went missing

from the front outside entrance steps to the church on or about October 25. Please either notify the office at 608-269-6949 or Margie at 608-269-5532. **THANK YOU!**



Are You Feeling Crafty?

We are still looking for crafty folks who would enjoy working on the **greeting card ministry** that helps support the work of the mission team. It is an enjoyable way to spend time with other crafty folks and support your church. If you have questions contact Beth Jerman—she has a lot of

experience with the greeting card ministry and would be glad to answer questions.



SUMMIT Spirits will be having our next meeting at Toni Burrows' house, 325 N L St., on Tuesday, December 6 at 6:30 p.m.

The Sparta Ministerial Association are meeting in the small kitchen on Wednesday, December 7 at noon.

On Tuesday, December 13, Lois circle will be meeting at the Family Restaurant at 11:30 a.m.

Wesleyan Circle will meet in the Gathering Place on Tuesday, December 13 for a pot luck and white elephant at 6:00 p.m.

Soaring Skills meet every Tuesday evening and every Saturday from 9-3 p.m.

Nurture will not meet in December. Our next meeting will be Thursday, January 5 at 6 p.m.

Records & History will not meet in December. Our next meeting will be Wednesday, January 11 at 9 a.m.



Pizza and a movie night this month is **December 17**. Pizza will be served in the small kitchen at 6 p.m. with the movie to follow in the Chapel. Everyone is welcome!

Bring a friend! Please contact Toni Burrows at 608-343-3029 before noon on December 17 if you will be attending so we know how much pizza to order.

December's movie is "The Christmas Candle"



Legend has it every 25 years an angel touches a single candle, and whomever lights this candle receives a miracle on Christmas Eve. But in 1890, at the dawn of the electric age, this centuries old legend may come to an end when a progressive young minister arrives. Now, the fiery candle maker must fight to preserve the legacy of the Christmas Candle. From bestselling author, Max Lucado. Rated PG.

Nurture Committee

“O, come let us adore Him...”

Christmas flowers are being offered to purchase and will grace our sanctuary through the Christmas season.

December 11 Big Creek Church Christmas service – 6 p.m. All are welcome.

December 24 “Light the Night” luminaries will be available this year to honor our loved ones. These luminaries will light up the Court St. sidewalk, while all are inside celebrating Christ’s birth at the Christmas Eve candlelight service at 4 p.m. They will be \$5 each, or 3 for \$10. Monies will help support our Ecumenical Food Pantry. Please use the forms provided. **2 or 3 volunteers are needed** to light them and then place the bags prior to the service and then extinguish following. The Nurture Committee will prepare the bags.

“Joy to the World!”

The Nurture Committee **will not meet** in December. The next meeting will be **January 6**.

Special Mission Recognition

Congratulations, **Marty Walley!** On November 13, the United Methodist Women had the pleasure of presenting a Special Mission Recognition pin and certificate to Marty. A \$40 gift to mission was given in her honor. She has blessed our UMW for over 45 years with her generous heart, servant hands, and her kind and loving ways. God bless you always!



Chancel Choir

Chancel Choir is starting up again. We will rehearse on Nov. 30 and Dec. 7 from 7 to 8 p.m. in the choir room. We will sing on Dec. 4 and Dec. 18 at the 9 a.m. service. Please come to the choir room by 8:30 am for rehearsal. Questions contact Ellen Hemstock at 608-633-0889 or wonder@centurytel.net.



Christmas Caroling

The Chancel Choir will be caroling on **Wed. Dec. 21 at 6 PM**. Anyone who would like to join us is welcome. Carolers should meet at Cyndi Wise’s home at 409 N. Benton St. at 5:45 PM, They should dress warm and bring goodies to share after the caroling. Hope to see you there.



Kid’s Corner

The Legend of the Candy Cane

Many years ago, a candy maker wanted to make a candy at Christmas time that would serve as a witness to his Christian faith, so he made the Christmas candy cane.

He incorporated several symbols for the birth, ministry, and death of Jesus. He began with a stick of pure white hard candy. The white symbolizes the Virgin Birth (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26-35) and the sinless nature of Jesus (1 John 3:5). The hardness of the candy symbolizes the Solid Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4), the foundation of the Church (Matthew 16:18); and the firmness of the promises of God (Psalm 18:30-32).

The candy maker made the candy in the form of a “J” to represent the precious name of Jesus, who came to earth as our Savior (1 John 3:16-17), and a symbol to represent the staff of the Good Shepherd (John 10:14).

Thinking that the candy was somewhat plain, the candy maker stained it with red stripes. He used three small stripes to show the stripes of the scourging Jesus received prior to his crucifixion (Mark 15:15) for our healing (Isaiah 53:5). The large red stripe represented the blood shed by Christ on the cross for our salvation (Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7).

Unfortunately, the candy lost its original meaning and became just a decoration seen only at Christmas time. But the true meaning is still there for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Pray that this traditional symbol will again be used as a witness for the glory and honor of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Servant Leadership Board for 2023

Servant Leadership Board (Accountable Leadership)

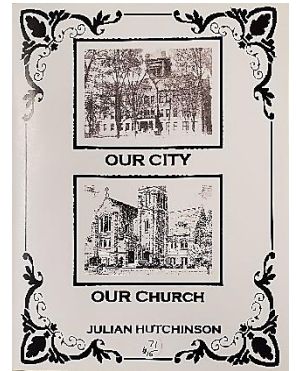
Pastor	Rev. Loretta Waughtal
Chair	Toni Burrows '23
Finance	Paul Foulke '23
Finance	Julie Hanson '24
Trustees Representative.....	Scott Naeseth '23
Trustees Representative.....	Peggy Wright '24
Staff/Pastor Parish Representative	John Lodico '24
Staff/Pastor Parish Representative/Lay Leader	Ellen Hemstock '25
At Large.....	Ron Phillips '24
Lay Leader.....	Donna Burhnam '25
At Large.....	26'
At Large.....	26'

Thank you to all who have agreed to serve on the new Servant Leadership Board. As you can see there are spots still needing to be filled. Please call the church office or stop in if you're interested. If you would like to receive charge conference book please call the church office at 608-269-6949.

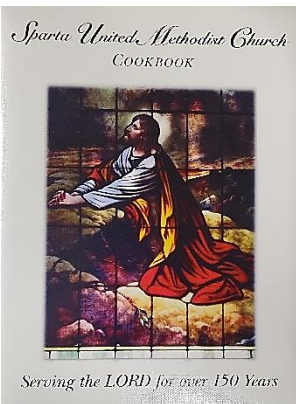


Looking for a Unique Gift?

Do you know what the first business was in this city we now call Sparta? Do you know what year the Methodist Church was first established in Sparta? We have a limited number of Julian Hutchinson's book "Our City Our Church" that has the answers to these questions and so many more. There is so much interesting information about the beginnings of Sparta and our United Methodist Church that it is a steal at \$15 or two books for \$28. We could possibly even get the author to sign your books.



Maybe you know someone who is just beginning the adventure of learning to cook or is setting up a household for the first time. A copy of the Sparta UMC Cookbook might be just the ticket. It is full of famously delicious recipes from our very favorite cooks in the church. This is a beautiful cookbook that comes in a small three-ring binder so favorite family recipes can easily be added to the collection. The cookbooks are a real bargain at \$5 each.



Hello December

December Anniversaries

03 Tim & Pastor Loretta
09 Pete & Beth Jerman
24 Tom & Laurie Graber
27 Tim & Judy Fuhrmann
27 Russ & Dana Tock

December Birthdays

01 Mandy Moore
02 Jack Buswell
02 Priscilla Hemmersbach
03 Kmaya Richards
04 Mary Axelsen
04 Joyce Graewin
05 Hayden White
06 Craig Goodenough
09 Oliva Cole
10 Kay Foulke
10 Eileen Roller
14 Deb Thurston
15 Diane Noonan
15 Madeline Tadisch
16 Donald Knoll
17 Jeffrey Ascher
17 Dave Kemp III
19 Mark Christiano
21 Gary Ascher
22 Tim Fuhrmann
23 Bridget Von Ruden
29 Amarra Davis
30 Matthew Foss



December Schedules

Tech Team

4 Ben & Hailee
11 Ron & Kristine
18 Toni & Amy
25 Cheryl & Amy

Liturgist

4 Amy Kiefer
11 Toni Burrows
18 Marty Walley
25 Judy Fuhrmann

Ushers

4 Bob & Cathy
11 Kurt & Amy
18 Peggy, Donna & Ron
25 John & Karen



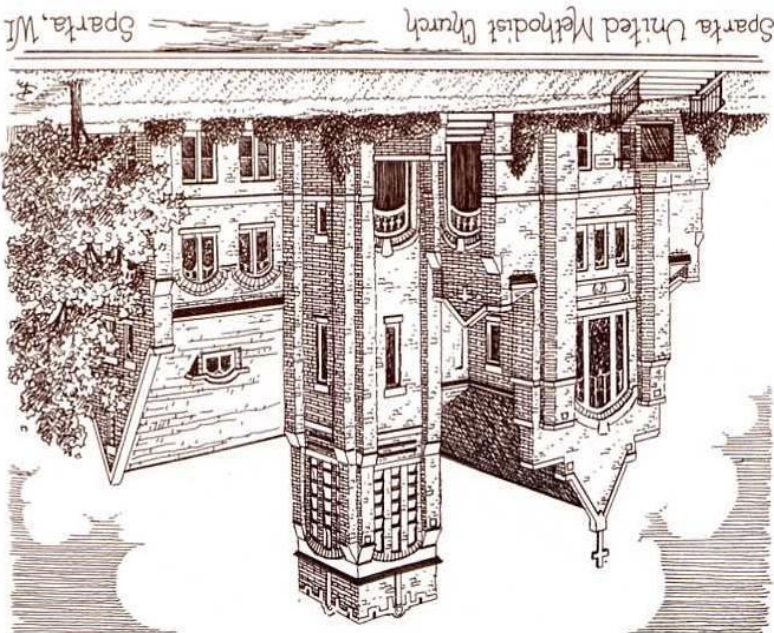
The Chimes

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Prepared Especially For:



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

Phone: (608)269-6949

Fax: (608)269-6940

Email: office@spartamethodist.com

Website: spartaumc.net

SUMC Worship Schedule

In-house Service

9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings

Livestream Service

9:00 a.m. on Facebook

Online Service

YouTube: Sparta UMC month day year