

“The CHIMES” – November

Volume 55, No. 11

2020

Continuing the Conversation...

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower...⁴ Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing...⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. ¹² “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:1, 4-5, 7-12)



It is that time of year again when I am busily preparing charge conference reports and filling out forms. I am so thankful for the help of Michele and committee chairs in gathering information and organizing it. Being church—even in the administrative area—is not a one-person show.

Because of the types of information I have to gather for charge conference and the upcoming year-end reports it causes me to look back over the previous year—and what a year it has been! I don’t think any of us ever dreamed we would be living through a pandemic and all of the changes it has forced us to adopt.

Some of these changes have been downright frustrating and unacceptable to some—social distancing, mask wearing, etc. Other changes have been frustrating but also kind of exciting, with still unreached potential for ministry, as we learn together about livestreaming and recording worship services. Believe me, this pastor never had dreams or aspirations of

becoming a televangelist; yet, here I am showing up across the airwaves with unknown number of other pastors each week as we try to figure out how best to lead ministry during a pandemic with all of the challenges it adds to this thing called life.

With all the change that this year has brought, one thing that brings me great comfort is knowing as I stay connected to Jesus (or abide in him) and keep his commandment my life will continue to bear fruit because Jesus is ultimately doing the work through me to glorify God. What is true for me is also true for the church.

One of the first things I learned when I got here a little over two years ago was that the Sparta UMC ministry plan was built on the foundation of “Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations.” Just as a reminder those five practices are: Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity.

Over the years, you have built some very fruitful ministries on this foundation. Others things were tried and let go because they didn’t work here, and that is ok. And then there is this present time we are living in. A time when we have had to suspend many of our favorite ministries.

This has been my greatest struggle for most of the year. How are we “abiding in Christ” and continuing to be a fruitful congregation? Notice it is fruitful congregation not fruitful pastor. We are all part of Christ’s body and it takes all of us abiding in Christ and being fruitful together.

I want to specifically address two of the fruitful practices in this letter: Intentional Faith Development and Risk-taking Mission and Service. These are two crucial parts of being faithful followers of Jesus; and I need help figuring out how to address them.

I miss the kids we would normally have participating in BASH. I miss the adults that regularly participated in the studies and frankly, I looked forward to the day when we would have more folks participating. Moreover, I know that folks miss participating; but how do we continue and make sure we are doing our best to keep everyone safe and healthy? Can we utilize more of our technology by doing studies on zoom or messenger, or is there something else out there that would serve us even better? *continued*

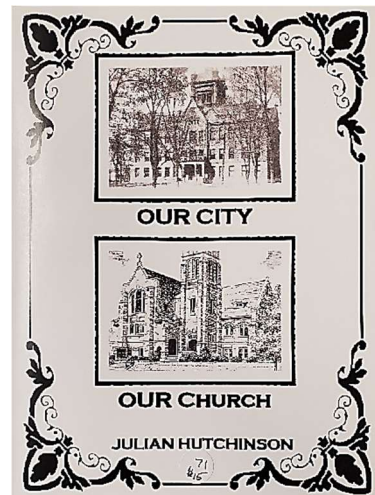
What about Risk-taking Mission and Service? Although we can't do some of our favorite mission services the way we always have, if we prayerfully put our collective thinking caps together we can come up with new ways to serve our community in the missions Christ is calling us to. This doesn't mean doing something just to be doing something. It also doesn't mean necessarily starting from scratch to reinvent the mission wheel. It could mean asking, who in our community is serving vulnerable people that we could partner with? After all Risk-taking Mission and Service is not about bringing recognition and glory to us, but seeking ways to best serve Christ for God's glory.

As we move toward the holiday season and the end of 2020 I'm asking you to pray and brainstorm with me about what are the new and creative ways we can focus on Intentional Faith Development and Risk-taking Mission and Service as we close out the year and move into 2021. These are such important parts of being faithful followers of Christ and no one person has all the answers. No one person can be the church alone, that is why Jesus put us together and invites us to abide in him as he abides in us so that we will bear much fruit for the glory of God..

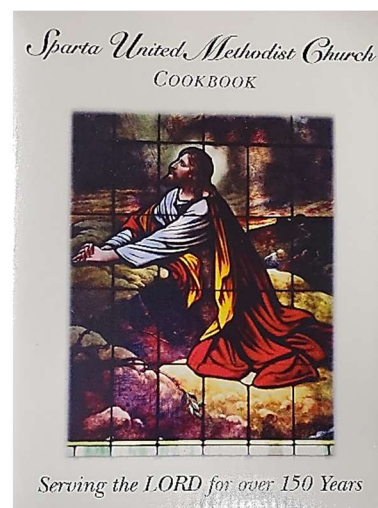
God bless you as you seek to know and love God fully!
Pastor L

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.

Call the church office if you are interested in either of these books and we will work out the details on payment and getting your book(s) to you.

Feeling the Love

Thank you SUMC for the signs of appreciation I received for Pastor Appreciation month. They are beautiful reminders to me of your love and appreciation. In the picture, you may notice a heart-shaped lock; you can look for its addition to the Love Lock Bridge here in Sparta. Thank you also for the poem read by Priscilla during worship on October 25 and the card she gave me from all of you!



Stewardship as Discipleship

“If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill’, and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” (James 2:15-17)

How does a disciple set aside his or her life for God? We simplify, in our denomination, the complicated issue of discipleship as the following: your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. It is important to note that discipleship is comprised of actions, not beliefs. You may say all the creeds, but as James (2:19) points out, “Even the demons believe [in God].”

Much of our teaching about stewardship has to do with giving financially to support the mission and ministry of the church. That is giving, but what makes it discipleship. Last month I noted that when we are planning an expenditure, John Wesley advises us to ask, 1) am I acting as a proprietor or a steward? 2) am I following Scripture? 3) can I offer this as a sacrifice to God, through Jesus Christ? and 4) will this action be judged as righteous?

These are the questions of a mature disciple who understands that in the Kingdom of God, actions speak louder than words. Since the disciple knows that everything comes from God (a belief), then every expenditure, even spending for oneself or one’s family, should be put to Wesley’s tests. That is what sets aside the disciple’s expenditures for God. The disciple turns beliefs into action and converts the simple materialism of the economy into spirituality. Spending money may be indistinguishable between disciple and non-disciple, but the disciple’s spending helps bring about the Kingdom of God.

Reread Wesley’s four rules above and you will see that a disciple’s expenditure includes prayer, presence, gift, service, and witness.

Jim Wells, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation
Visit the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation at
www.wumf.org or [Facebook/wumf.org](https://www.facebook.com/wumf.org)
Or call 1-888-903-9863

Discovering Joy through Extravagant Generosity

Stress. Anxiety. Fear. These words capture well the state of mind of many of us over the past several months. We have witnessed social and political unrest amid the unknowns of living through a pandemic. This is new territory for all of us; and so many opinions on both ends of a spectrum. But really, when you think about it every day brings new challenges, new adventures, new opportunities no matter what era we are living in.

As the news of the pandemic came and closed down most everything, including churches, I also felt the stress of not knowing how we would go on. But God is good and faithful and so are his people. We quickly began learning a new way of offering worship—totally online. And believe me, it has been and continues to be a learning experience. We are now offering a limited in-person worship service while livestreaming and recording the service—continuing to learn as we go. We are discovering new ways of connecting and serving.

We have had to make many mid-course adjustments of *our* plans. Maybe not a bad thing, as it has gotten me off “cruise control” of doing ministry and actively seeking God’s guidance more diligently. One thing the stewardship task force and I had been planning to do as part of the stewardship challenge grant requirements was a financial campaign. As we are doing our best to figure out how to continue to be Christ’s church it seems time has gotten away from us to do a full-fledged campaign.

What we will be doing is offering a couple of sermons in November with a stewardship focus on Extravagant Generosity (one of the five practices of fruitful congregations). I will kick things off on November 8 sharing a message called “Try Giving Yourself Away.” Paul Foulke, our finance chair, will offer a follow-up message on November 15 called “Why We Give Thanks.” I ask you to prayerfully consider your continued commitment to supporting the Sparta United Methodist Church; and if you are in a place where it is possible consider increasing your support.

I really hope you will join us in worship either in-person or online especially during these weeks as we focus on Extravagant Generosity.

I want to close with thanking you all for your faithful participation in the Sparta United Methodist Church through your prayers, your presence (online or in person), your gifts, your service, and your witness. You have a wonderful legacy as being Christ’s church in Sparta and beyond; I pray and trust that you will continue to be a vibrant part of this community well into the future.

God bless!
Pastor Loretta Waughtal



Shop with scrip...support your church

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the church through the shop with scrip program. As the holiday season approaches there will be additional opportunities to purchase scrip cards. You can use the cards for your holiday shopping, or they make nice gifts for the hard to shop for on your list.



A big thank you also goes out to Cheryl Isensee for organizing our scrip program and keeping it up and running. The next scrip order will be going in on **November 8** with a second opportunity to purchase cards on **November 29**. You can mail your order directly to Cheryl 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).



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?

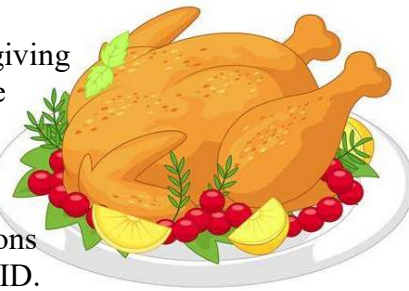
When you shop on smile.amazon.com the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organizations selected by customers. To take advantage of this opportunity just go to the smile.amazon.com site and put Sparta United Methodist Church into the search area. 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.

Community Thanksgiving Dinner

The Community Thanksgiving Dinner will once again be taking place in Sparta. There are however some important changes taking place because of restrictions on gathering due to COVID.



One of those changes is that the organizers cannot receive donations of homemade pies this year. Pies will be purchased at a cost of \$8 per pie. If you were one of the bakers who usually made pies for the dinner you may want to consider making a donation to cover the cost of a pie or pies. If you would like to do that you can get a check made out to Sparta Ministerial Association to Pastor Loretta (she is the treasurer for the ministerial association) and let her know that it is for the Thanksgiving Dinner.

A second change will be in the number of volunteer workers and the type of work volunteers will do. This year there will still be deliveries to shut-ins but all other meals will be done on a carry out basis only. If you have questions or would like to help, the volunteer coordinator for the Thanksgiving Dinner is Valerie Roosa. Her cell phone number is 608-726-1573.



Nearly Time to Deck the Halls

The first Sunday in Advent is November 29 and we could all use a little extra light and beauty in our lives for this holiday season. Although we won't be going all out on decorating the entire church this year, we still need the sanctuary and entry points decked out for the season. This will take some volunteer effort to get the Christmas tree set up in the sanctuary, the garlands hung, window decorations put out, etc.

It doesn't mean we all have to be here at the same time working, but it does mean those who are in the know on where items are stored will need to bring items out of storage. Those who want to help decorate will need to coordinate times to come in to do the decorating you want to help with. If you would like to work with a small team and can do so with social distancing, super! Call the church office and we will coordinate all the efforts.

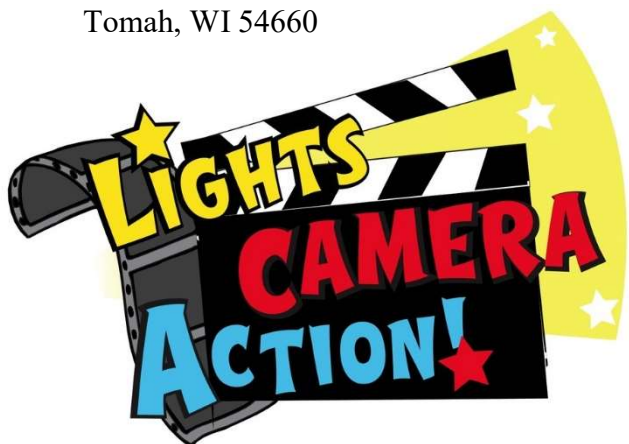
All of this needs to happen between the end of worship on November 22 and before worship begins on November 29 so that we are ready to move into the holiday season.

Looking For A Ministry You Can Do From Home?

The Tomah Veterans affairs (VA) Medical Center is asking for letters and cards for veterans restricted to the VA Community Living Center. They are in need of uplifting and positive messages, children's artwork, etc. In order to ensure each veteran receives a card or letter, they need at least 200 each week.

What do you say? A creative and loving way to lift another's spirits. The address to send your cards or letters to is:

Tomah VA Medical Center
Attn: Mail Call (135)
500 East Veterans Street
Tomah, WI 54660



The past seven and a half months have been a very interesting and challenging time to share Passionate Worship. I am so thankful for the beginnings in March with **Larry and Lynn Humphrey** and **Cyndi Wise** helping to produce and upload recorded worship services while our church remained closed.

I am equally thankful in our present situation for **Cheryl Isensee, Toni Burrows, Lynn Humphrey**, and my grandson, **Jonah Waughtal** (who has stepped in to help us get through technical difficulties on more than one occasion), as we learn about livestreaming and recording our hybrid services in the sanctuary.

I am thankful for the donations that came in earlier this year that made the technology in the sanctuary possible. I am also thankful to **Cyndi Wise** and **Ellen Hemstock** for providing beautiful instrumental music for worship. Thank you to all who have given positive feedback and words of encouragement as we learn as we go through this challenging time. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

As we do our best to continue offering Passionate Worship we all have much to be thankful for. God has been in this with us from the beginning, walking us through changes and making provisions; I pray our efforts bless the Lord and help draw people closer to God. —Pastor L



THANK YOU to Cindy Isensee for gathering the birth, baptism, marriage, death and membership records and taking them to the Monroe Country Local History Room and Museum to be scanned, indexed and incorporated into their files. Thank you, Barb McGreevy for the many hours you spent scanning, indexing and incorporating this information into the History Room's files and also for our digital church files. You two will never know how much your time and effort in preserving our church's history is appreciated by us and generations to come!

THANK YOU! A big thank you to Dean and Ann Olson for the beautiful vintage lamp they graciously donated to the church. It currently is in the library where it looks stunning. Once the church is fully open, everyone will be able to enjoy its beauty. Thank you Dean and Ann!

Records and History Committee
We Are Keeping the Eternal Flame Glowing

THANK YOU to those who have given in-kind gifts of cleaning and disinfecting products to the church. They are very appreciated as it can be difficult to find those items in bulk these days, but when you are shopping and pick up one or two items at a time they certainly add up and are put to good use in keeping the church clean and disinfected. Thanks again!

Items still in short supply:

- Spray disinfectant (like Microban 24 or Lysol)
- Disinfectant wipes
- Forever stamps

SUMC Charge Conference Set

The Sparta United Methodist Church Charge Conference will be on **Sunday, November 22 at 10 a.m.** (that should be right after our worship service). Committee chairs please get your reports in to the church office by November 2!

From the Parish Nurse...

Greetings! I hope you and your loved ones are staying healthy and experiencing Christ's peace.

I want to talk a little about eating healthy in this time when it is not always possible to get out and get the fresh foods we always want. Since the beginning of time, eating and diet practices have been considered from many different perspectives.

Eating has provided for physical needs, social needs, and even has spiritual implications. The sharing of food historically has been associated with generosity and fellowship (Pr. 22:9, Luke 15:1-2). Jesus used the common diet ingredients of bread and wine when He shared the Last Supper with His disciples. Eating supports our bodies, emotions, and spirits!

What Is In Your Pantry Before COVID-19, pantry staples were the supporting cast. Now, as you limit trips to the market and wait days for grocery delivery, sometimes they are the star of the show. Remember Hansen's IGA delivers on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays. 608-269-6752—CALL BEFORE 9:30AM.

Anyone can boil a box of pasta and call it dinner. Healthy meals take a little more thought and effort. But it's worth it to give your body what it needs without stressing yourself out.

Do the Best You Can In an ideal scenario, you'd have a balance of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and dairy at every meal.

It might be hard to pull that off now, and that's OK. What you eat affects your physical and mental health, and both are a priority. Start with what you have and fill in the gaps.

Take Stock of Your Pantry First, get your pantry in good shape. Group similar products. Share products you don't plan to use with others who need them.

Make a mental or actual list of what you have. Use these categories as a guide:

- Canned soups and broths-(try to watch the sodium in these or add water)
- Canned fruits
- Canned vegetables
- Canned beans and legumes
- Condiments
- Canned meat and fish
- Dried beans
- Rice and pasta



Make a Meal List Instead of a meal plan, which is based on preparing certain dishes on certain days of the week, make a list of meals you can make any time based on what you have.

To keep stress low in the kitchen, plan your meal list for a few days or a week. That way you won't have to decide on the spot what to have for every meal, every day -- especially when you're hungry.

Keep these things in mind:

- **Balance.** Work in as many fruits and vegetables as you can. Protein (tuna, chicken, beans, nuts, seeds) will help you feel full longer.
- **Weather.** If it's cold, make warm meals, like soups or stews. They're a great way to pack in a variety of vegetables. Bonus: Big batches leave a lot of leftovers.
- **Variety.** You'll get bored quickly if you do beans, rice, repeat. Think about themes or ethnic cooking styles to help you mix it up, including Asian, taco Tuesday, Mediterranean, pasta night, and breakfast for dinner.
- **Leftovers.** You don't have to create an entirely new meal every day. Pick a few options for breakfast, lunch, and dinner and rotate them. If your food reserves allow, make double or triple batches of meals, and freeze the extras for later.
- **Flexibility.** Pantry meals are very forgiving. Substitute one bean, vegetable, or grain for another and rely on your spice rack to amp up the flavor.

Use these ideas or vary them based on what you have in your pantry, fridge, and freezer:

- Sliced apples with peanut or almond butter
- Banana, yogurt, and granola
- Whole-grain cereal with shelf-stable milk
- Scrambled eggs with frozen peppers, tortillas, salsa
- Frozen berry smoothie made with spinach and shelf-stable milk
- Tuna salad or chicken salad with whole-grain crackers or bread.
- Black beans with diced tomatoes, onion, and chili spices
- Canned chickpeas with quinoa, baked tofu, lemon, and soy sauce
- Whole-wheat pasta with chicken sausage, jarred artichokes, and olive oil
- Chicken and salsa cooked in the slow cooker, served with brown rice and avocado
- Frozen salmon with canned green beans and a baked sweet potato

What worked? What didn't? Make notes as you go and adjust for next time.

continued

Keep a Running Grocery List You don't want to have to stop by the market for that one ingredient you forgot. Keep a running grocery list of canned beans, fruits, vegetables, meats, and grains, plus items that pull them all together like canned tomatoes, jarred sauces, and condiments.

To keep things healthy, look for low-sodium and no-sugar-added items. Choose whole grains and brown rice. And cross super-processed foods off your list.

Think fresh when you can. Root vegetables like sweet potatoes keep a long time, as do apples and oranges. But frozen is just fine. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to call me.

May He, who is our Heavenly Father, help us to experience wholeness and love and peace and joy in our lives. Amen.

With Love and Prayers,
Priscilla



UMW News...

Congratulations, Peggy Wright, upon receiving a Special Mission Recognition pin from the United Methodist Women. A \$40 Gift to Mission was given in her honor.

Peggy serves in a variety of ways: volunteer coordinator, usher team, money counter, and for many years taught Sunday School and served on the Education Committee. She has probably served on every committee in the church over the years and her knowledge, common sense, and people-person qualities have helped guide and lead this church.



Peggy is a wonderful example of quiet, dedicated, faithful service to God and to her church. Thank you for your ever-ready smile and helping hands. We love you and appreciate all you do!



Congratulations Peggy Wright! Good and faithful servant.



Thank you to the UMW and Cyndi Wise for presenting to me with the Special Mission Recognition and the pin. I will wear it with pride. I have enjoyed all my years serving this church and miss getting together with all my volunteers. I enjoyed teaching Sunday School for 18 years and serving on several committees. I hope to continue as long as I am able. Thanks again. I love you all. —Peggy Wright

BASH News...

Although we have not been able to meet this fall because of COVID, Pastor L, the BASH teachers, and ad council wanted to make sure the kids know that they are not forgotten. We also wanted to share a positive message with them as we move into the holiday season. So we pulled out our list of BASH and confirmation students and put together goody bags for them that were delivered the end of October. The goody bags were a hit and a couple of families were able to send Pastor L pictures of their kids with completed projects.



Welcome Home Parade

The ad council organized a drive-by parade to welcome home and thank Captain Joe Tadisch and Specialist Brandon Von Ruden as they recently returned home from active duty overseas. We are all delighted that they are safely home and rejoining their families. Thank you to Margie Lakowske for taking the lead on organizing the parade.



Organizing the parade lineup



Captain Joe Tadisch and family



Specialist Brandon Von Ruden and family



November Anniversary

Nov. 5 John & Katherine Abbott

November Birthdays

Nov. 3 Donna Burnham
Nov. 5 Kevin Lakowske
Nov. 6 Morgan Rodgers
Nov. 8 Ken Shaw
Nov. 9 Jacqueline Davis
Nov. 9 Cheryl Isensee
Nov. 9 Aaron Lieder
Nov. 11 Emma Blackdeer
Nov. 12 Dean Benedict
Nov. 12 Jeanne Davis
Nov. 12 Jerry Miller
Nov. 12 Scarlett Simplot
Nov. 13 Denise Ebert
Nov. 13 Harrison Flury
Nov. 13 LeRoy Jackson
Nov. 14 Jessica Janzen
Nov. 14 Nathan Janzen
Nov. 14 Betsy Tadisch
Nov. 15 Roger Jerome
Nov. 16 Julie Jones-Conte
Nov. 18 Penny Eddy
Nov. 18 Julian Hutchinson
Nov. 18 Elizabeth Jerman
Nov. 18 Ron Phillips
Nov. 18 Marti Walley
Nov. 21 Richard Wright
Nov. 24 Brandon Burnham
Nov. 25 Henry McGreevy
Nov. 28 Alix Herrman
Nov. 29 Phyllis Christiano



Our Deepest Sympathy to:

The family and friends of Rosella Jenkins who passed away on August 22.

The family and friends of Al Wright who passed away on October 11.

Count

Count your blessings instead of your crosses

Count your gains instead of your losses

Count your joys instead of your woes

Count your friends instead of your foes

Count your smiles instead of your tears

Count your courage instead of your fears

Count your full years instead of your lean

Count your kind deeds instead of your mean

Count your health instead of your wealth

Count on God instead of yourself

Your Blessings

Church Facebook Page

Our former office manager had set up an unofficial church Facebook page that will be shut down in the next couple of weeks. The church does have an official Facebook site if you would like 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.

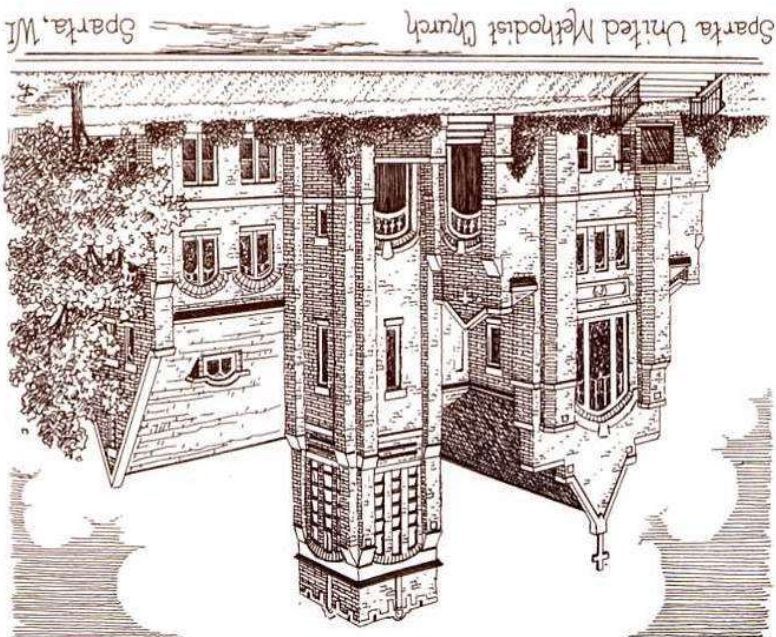


The Chimes

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Prepared Especially For:



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Pastor's Cell Phone: (608) 386-1862

Phone: (608)269-6949

Fax: (608)269-6940

Email: office@spartamethodist.com

Website: lewaughtal.wixsite.com/spartaumc

SUMC Worship Schedule

In-house Service

In sanctuary with social distancing, masks, etc.
Sunday, 9 a.m.; this service is livestreamed

Online Service

YouTube: Sparta UMC month day year