

“The CHIMES” – October

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2020

Continuing the Conversation...

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?...I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!” (Psalm 27:1, 13-14 NRSV)



As I reflect on the last few months, it would not be difficult to lament over what a strange year it has been and all of the things we couldn't and still can't do. If I let myself go down that slippery slope, I would quickly become discouraged and depressed. I would be more likely to get caught up in the ugly rhetoric that is much too prevalent around politics and social issues. I'm not referring here to civil and respectful disagreements, but the ugly name calling and demeaning language and images that seem to have become the norm.

Sadly, I see this far too often in people who call themselves Christians. I fear that we have taken our eyes off God who is our light, salvation, and stronghold; and we have gotten tangled up in the noisy hatefulness of a lost world.

So, I just wanted to remind all of us that God set us apart as a church for a purpose; we are to be different from the world that doesn't know the God of love and light. As followers of Jesus Christ we are to share the love of God and bear the light of Christ, letting Christ's light shine brightly through us to light the path for others in this dark world.

In our baptism and membership vows, we made a covenant together to reject sin as we commit our lives to Christ and nurture one another in the Christian faith and life. We vowed to proclaim the good news and live

according to the example of Christ, faithfully participating in the ministries of this church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness.

I get that we are living through very challenging times and life can begin to feel overwhelming some days. That just means we have to do a better job of nurturing each other through this time. That might mean prayerfully showing tough love sometimes and reminding friends and family, as Christ's followers we don't demean others, we disagree respectfully and we pray for each other.

The Bible has much to say about both of those topics. Here are just a few examples, first about what comes out of our mouths:

“The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.” (Luke 6:45)

“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. (Ephesians 4:29)

“But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth.” (Colossians 3:8)

Here are just a few examples from the Bible on what it says about praying for others:

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,” (1 Timothy 2:1-3). We are to pray for everyone, especially those in leadership, and our lives will be peaceful and filled with godly dignity; although we do it not for us but because it is right and acceptable in God's sight.

continued

“Because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.” (Philemon 1:5-7) We are to pray for each other to be an effective witness of God’s love and our faith in Jesus, because it brings joy, encouragement, and refreshment to each other.

Because I do believe in the power of prayer to bring positive change both in my life and the lives of others, I take this verse to heart as I pray for you: *“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.”* (3 John 1:2)

I hope that you will take these words from Ephesians to heart and, *“Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,”* (Ephesians 6:19).

If we can do these things together (keep our eyes on God, our confidence in God’s goodness, keep our mouths from speaking evil, and our hearts and minds in constant prayer) it will be much easier to get through these difficult days. If you would like to discuss any of these Scriptures or like more examples, please feel free to give me a call or send me an email; I would love to talk with you.

Most important, when we have our priorities set correctly, it will be so much easier to see and give thanks for the blessings that continue to happen in our lives. I hope you have witnessed many of those blessings through reading in *The Chimes* all that has been happening here throughout the spring and summer months.

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

Thank you to all who use *AmazonSmile* when shopping online through Amazon. We received a \$19.87 donation from the *AmazonSmile* Foundation as a result of the activity between April 1 and June 30, 2020. Remember when shopping on Amazon to go through *AmazonSmile* and designate the Sparta United Methodist Church in Wisconsin as your benefactor.



2021 Altar Flower Schedule

Cathy Nichols is scheduling altar flowers for 2021. You may call, text, or email Cathy at: (cell: 608-487-4919, bcn@charter.net) to request months/dates, honor of/memory of and keep/not keep/gift to for each plant you sign up for. Undesignated plants are given to celebrate births, anniversaries, hospital stays, etc.

There are also **three spots left for 2020**. November 1, December 6, and December 27 all have one open spot for flowers. You can call the church office at 608-269-6949 to reserve any of those open spots. Cost of flowers is \$4.75 for one flower or \$9.50 for two flowers. You can send your check for flowers to the church office, be sure to designate it to altar flowers.

If you frequent Sparta Floral thank them for the beautiful plants they provide for our worship service at a much reduced rate.

Church Facebook Page

The church has 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. The worship services are now livestreamed on the church Facebook page at 9 a.m. on Sunday mornings. If you can’t join us right at 9 a recording of the service will also be on Facebook after the service.



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.

“Tis the Gift to Be Simple”

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free; 'tis the gift to come down where you ought to be (Simple Gifts/Shaker Hymn, Joseph Brackett)

During the Covid-19 pandemic, most of us are living under conditions of enforced simplicity. There are fewer luxuries and entertainments to spend money on and for most of us, less traveling, shopping, and visiting. Although, some people find the forced confinement to be stressful itself, most people are, all in all, under less of the kinds of stress they usually experience.

John Wesley, in his sermon, “The Use of Money (#50),” insists that simplicity is essential for the Godly use of money. If we earn all we can honestly, then we are to save all we can, meaning retain all we can, by not using it wastefully. Rather than spending on luxury foods and personal ornaments (home, fashion, etc.), says Wesley, we should “be content with what plain nature requires.” Nor, should we lead our children into an extravagant lifestyle.

Why, then are we saving? In order to serve God through 1) supplying your own simple needs, 2) and the needs of your family and household, and then 3) giving your surplus to the “household of faith” and to other people for their simple needs. We are not the proprietors of creation, but rather the stewards of it. So, when we are planning an expenditure, 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?

There are plenty of churches and people in need during the pandemic. This is a good time to get even better at God’s simplicity. As Wesley says in ending his sermon, “Give all ye have, as well as all ye are, a spiritual sacrifice to Him who withheld not from you his Son, his only Son.”

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

Financial Update

Thank you for your faithfulness in supporting the ministries of this church! We continue to stay current in paying all our bills and ministry obligations.

As a reminder, you can mail your offering to the church at: Sparta UMC, 210 N Court St., Sparta, WI 54656; or you can sign up for electronic giving by going to our church Web site at: lewaughtal.wixsite.com/spartaumc and clicking on the “Give Online” link at the bottom of the page (call the church office or our financial secretary, Heidi Sullivan if you have questions); or check with your financial institution and ask if they have a “bill pay” option that you can send your offering through.

However you choose to give, please know how important that act is to keeping our church alive and vital during this challenging time. Together we will continue faithfully serving God with trust and confidence.



Shop with scrip...support your church



Thank you to everyone who continues to support the church through the shop with scrip program. It is such a simple way to help as you do your regular shopping or eating at your favorite restaurants using the scrip cards. Those businesses then donate a percent of your spending back to the church.

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 **October 11**. 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).



In-Building Worship Continues

Worship services continue with social distancing precautions in place. Thank you to everyone who is respecting and working with the social distancing protocols. We understand it isn't a perfect situation but our main goal is to keep people safe and healthy as we worship God. There may come a time as we move into the winter season that we will have to stop in-house worship for a time but we will continue offering a recorded service if that becomes the case.

We are continuing to livestream the service and send out the recording of the service via email as early as we can. We are still experiencing a few bumps in the road as we go, but our goal remains to work on presenting the best worship service we possibly can.

It is understandable that not everyone is ready to come back to worship in the building, for many good reasons. If you are one who is not ready, please do not feel like you have to explain. You do not; and we will continue to record and post online services so that as many as possible have the opportunity to worship with this community of faith.

Please continue to call, text, or message Pastor with prayer requests and joys too. We all need to hear about and celebrate each other's joys! Pastor's cell number is 608-386-1862.



Family Promise

For those of you who are interested in being a Family Promise volunteer, but were not able to participate in the training yet there is good news: training videos are now available online. Just contact our Family Promise coordinator, Lynn Humphrey, to work out the details. Lynn's number is (608) 343-7015.

Our next date to host is December 6-13. At this time families are being interviewed but there is no one in the program yet. Also, there is a possibility because of COVID 19 that when a family does come into the program they may be staying in a hotel so our hosting responsibility would pertain of providing and dropping off supper for the family and possibly providing breakfast, lunch, and snack foods that would be kept at The Sparrow's Nest.

If you have any questions about Family Promise contact Lynn at the above number.

Congratulations!

On Saturday, September 19 Charlene Dale and Ryan Nowak were married at Sparta UMC.

It was a small, but beautiful wedding with immediate family in attendance to witness this happy occasion and celebrate the union of Char and Ryan. Prayers are lifted for many happy and healthy years together for Mr. and Mrs. Ryan and Char Nowak!



The Sparta Small Business Co-op is organizing a socially distanced ecumenical worship service in Evans Bosshard Park on Tuesday, October

20 at 3 p.m. Plan to bring your own chair. They are asking those in attendance to donate personal hygiene items, blankets, cash gifts to purchase gift cards for groceries or clothing for our Ft. McCoy troops that are struggling financially. Anything will help. Stay tuned for details as they become available.



Thank you to the UMW for the gift pack and begonia. Thank you friends for cards and good wishes for my birthday and surgery. I'm getting better every day. Thank you!

Pat Eggers



AlAnon Group Continues Meeting at SUMC

Did you know we have an AlAnon group meeting in the Sparta UMC? The Sparta Courage to Change AlAnon Family Group has been meeting here for several years. After a brief hiatus when we were closed because of COVID they are once again meeting regularly while practicing the best COVID 19 safety measures possible. During these difficult times people are in need of more love and support, especially those dealing with alcoholism and other addictions.

AlAnon is a support group that helps those who are struggling with a loved one's addiction to alcohol. They practice the 12 steps of recovery; their primary focus is to learn how to trust God, not themselves. They are seeking to find peace and serenity no matter what their loved one's addiction is doing.

The Sparta courage to Change Family Group meets every Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. at SUMC in the "Garden Room." They use the back door entrance on K Street. There is informational literature in the church office if you know someone you think might be interested in this group.

Here is what one member has to say about the group: *"I have been attending AlAnon for almost 11 years now. I came to AlAnon when my husband went into treatment for his addictions. I was raised in a Christian home and had a strong faith and relationship with Christ, but living with an alcoholic started to drive me crazy (sorry, best word to use). This crazy caused me to be angry and obsessed, wanting to control everything I could. AlAnon has taught me to focus on me and my relationship with God, to completely turn my life and my will over to Him, daily and sometimes by each moment. I am so grateful for all AlAnon has taught me and all the wonderful people it has brought into my life."* —Anonymous, Sparta

Introducing...

I am very happy to introduce our new office administrative assistant to you! Her regular hours will be 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. When we are able to open the office for regular business hours, I will still plan to have the office open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Michele began working on September 15 and has already taken a huge load off this pastor's shoulders. Please join me in welcoming Michele.



My name is Michele Thornton. I am married to Kurt and together we five children. One daughter Mia, age 11 and four sons; Brandon-23, Nic-21, Kelvin-19 and Bryant-15. We, along with our dog Nash and cat L.S. (stands for little stinker—and she is) live in Tomah.

I am originally from Illinois but moved to Wisconsin when I was eight. Luckily this was before I started watching football so no, I'm NOT a Bears fan. This is usually the first question I get when people find out I was born in Illinois. Go Pack! I'm fairly new to the area only moving to Tomah eight years ago. Most of my life has been in northern Wisconsin.

I'm very blessed to have been given this opportunity and I look forward to meeting everyone. Thank you for all the kind welcomes I've received already.

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).

Because we are hoping to vote on moving from the administrative council model to accountable leadership board model, the plan at this point is to have the conference in person in the sanctuary with mask-wearing and social distancing in place. That way we can also use the mics in the sanctuary so everyone will be able to hear.

Our District Superintendent will facilitate the conference because of the extra vote to move to accountable leadership. I will also plan to have my laptop set up for a ZOOM meeting for those interested who cannot attend. Because we are conducting the meeting in the sanctuary the people participating on ZOOM may have to use the “chat” feature in ZOOM to communicate. If the COVID 19 numbers get to a place that would prevent us from meeting at the church we would go totally to a ZOOM format.

We also still have to attend to all of the other business that is required around charge conference. That means the **necessary forms, budget, and committee reports must be turned in to the church office by October 15** so the conference report books can be copied and put together.

Even though this has been an unusual year, we have still been functioning as Christ’s servants in this community so reports are still very much necessary to keep a history of what has gone on at SUMC since our 2019 charge conference.



Accountable (Servant) Leadership

As we prepare to take the final step in moving to an accountable leadership board model (what we will refer to as our Servant Leadership Board) at SUMC I want to take this time to give a brief summary of what it will look like for us.

The Servant Leadership Board will streamline the functioning of the church. The Board will consist of 9 to 12 members: a chairperson, two trustee reps, two finance reps, two S/PPRC reps, and two to five at-large members, and the pastor. When serving on the Servant

Leadership Board members commit to and are expected to follow the Guiding Principles document.

When voting the pastor is not included in determining a quorum but maintains a membership vote, except for personal evaluation and compensation. A 2/3 approval determines a final vote; respectful conversation is valued.

The Servant Leadership Board will make decisions to help us fulfill our mission to make new and maturing disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We will use the following questions to help keep us intentional in making those decisions: 1) How will we invite non-members/unchurched to our planned events and how will they be served by these ministries? 2) How will they experience radical hospitality? 3) How will guests and members be personally invited to know God as revealed in Jesus Christ?

Moving to Accountable Leadership does NOT mean that current committees will no longer be needed, they will just function differently. For example, the trustees committee will become a work team. They may or may not meet formally. The two trustees Board representatives will work with their trustees work team in whatever way seems best to them and still gets the needed work done. Other work teams will function in the same way. For instance, the Nurture work team may or may not decide to meet formally, but they still play an integral part in working with the pastor to create meaningful worship experiences, educational classes for both children and adults, etc.

I hope this helps everyone see that important ministries are not being taken away; we will just be working and communicating differently. But the work and the communication in whatever forms remain vitally important.

At this time, there has been information in *The Chimes* several times in the last year and a half, as well as an informational video that was emailed out to our membership list. I hope that you have been paying attention to all of this and are ready for a vote in November. If you have lingering questions, please contact me, Pastor Loretta at the church office, or Toni Burrows, our current ad council chair, at (608) 343-3029. We would love to hear from you and try our best to answer your questions. Also, if you would like to be considered to serve on the Servant Leadership Board let us know that too.

World Communion Sunday

"Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."

(1 Corinthians 10:17, NRSV)



United Methodists join Christians of different traditions to celebrate World Communion Sunday on the first Sunday in October. World Communion Sunday began in 1936 as a way to recognize our ecumenical oneness in Christ and to bring Christians together in a spirit of unity and peace.

In the United Methodist Church, congregations throughout the denomination will also join together to receive a Special Sunday offering that helps students from around the world reach their full potential through scholarships, training, and mentoring. The World Communion Sunday offering is one of six church-wide special offerings received throughout the year. To support this ministry give a gift with your regular offering designated to World Communion Sunday. Thanks in advance for your generous support.

October Anniversaries

- Oct. 1 Ron and Donna Burnham
- Oct. 2 Larry and Marty Walley
- Oct. 9 Elvis and Carly Molina
- Oct. 15 Evan and Jess Wiedemann
- Oct. 18 LeRoy and June Jackson
- Oct. 19 Dan and Deb Dishinger
- Oct. 23 Jim and Clarice Stuessel
- Oct. 25 Hutch Hutchinson and Muriel Canfield
- Oct. 31 Jerry and Laurie Hesselberg

October Birthdays

- Oct. 3 Mary Lou Cole
- Oct. 4 Lloyd Chenoweth
- Oct. 5 Jessica Wiedemann
- Oct. 7 Pat Clark
- Oct. 7 Zachary Herrman
- Oct. 9 Monica Davis
- Oct. 9 Kelsey Foss
- Oct. 10 Nicole Jacobs

Welcome...

On Sunday, September 20 Winnifred Joan Smith was baptized. She is the daughter of Mac and Abby Smith and granddaughter of Kurt and Amy Kiefer. Welcome Winnie into this family of faith.



October Birthdays *continued*

- Oct. 10 Peter Jerman
- Oct. 10 Angel Loeffelholz
- Oct. 11 Duane Hobson
- Oct. 12 Emily Von Ruden
- Oct. 14 Bev Donahue
- Oct. 17 Ronald Ebert
- Oct. 17 Dorothy Hering
- Oct. 18 Daniel Davis
- Oct. 18 Antonia Gutierrez
- Oct. 20 Berndt Borreson
- Oct. 21 Kory Foss
- Oct. 22 Emma Wiedemann
- Oct. 23 Krystal Lieder
- Oct. 23 Beth Nowak
- Oct. 24 Nathan Goodenough
- Oct. 25 Eden Glut
- Oct. 27 K'Andrea Ebert
- Oct. 27 Cathleen Nichols
- Oct. 29 Dick Gajewsky

From the Parish Nurse...

What if God were to write a letter to you? Well, he has and it's a love letter!

Have you read the Bible as being God's love letter to you? The following compilation of paraphrases from the Bible brings home to us the message of God's unconditional love and grace for those who trust in Christ.

Right now I invite you to pray with me... Dear Lord God Almighty, you are the loving Father that we need. Your grace through Jesus Christ is so precious to us. We ask Holy Spirit that you use the truth of Scripture to renew our minds and to help us to open our hearts to trust you fully. Lord, you are the Potter and we are the clay. We place ourselves in your hands now — soften our hearts as we read your love letter to us. Mold and shape us to be more like Jesus we pray. Amen.

Love and prayers, Priscilla



Dear Friend,

I love you! (John 3:16) I created you in my image (Genesis 1:27) and I called you “very good” (Genesis 1:31). I knit you together in your mother's womb (Psalm 139:13). I know the number of the hairs on your head (Matthew 10:30) and I am familiar with all your ways (Psalm 139:3). My precious thoughts of you are as countless as the sand on the seashore (Psalm 139:17-18).

I am Love (1 John 4:16) and the greatest commandment that I have for you is that you love (Matthew 22:37-40). My love is made complete in you when you receive my love, love me, and love others (1 John 4:7-21). To show you how to live this life of love I've given you Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), laws that honor me and are good and pleasing to you (Psalm 119).

To fear me is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7). But you don't need to remain afraid of me; if you rely on me then my perfect love will remove all of your fear (1 John 4:18). I am a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness (Exodus 34:6).

Now, in the person of Jesus Christ, I knock on the door of your heart, waiting for you to let me in (Revelation 3:20). Open the door and I will forgive your sins (Acts 10:43) and choose not to remember them anymore (Isaiah 43:25). I will teach you how to live your daily life with me in the kingdom of the

heavens (Matthew 4:17). I will adopt you into my family (Ephesians 1:5) and lavish on you my fatherly love (1 John 3:1). Then you will marvel that I chose you to be my child (Ephesians 1:11-12) and I drew you to myself (John 6:44).

You see I've loved you from the beginning, long before you loved me (1 John 4:19). I sent my son Jesus, the exact representation of my being (Hebrews 1:3), to die on the cross in your place (Romans 5:8),

When you are “born again” by my Holy Spirit (John 3:3) then you become a new person (2 Corinthians 5:17) with a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26), a new self (Ephesians 4:24), and a new life (Romans 6:4). You have my precious righteousness as a gift (Romans 5:19). Your body becomes a temple for my Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) and you become a saint (Ephesians 1:18).

Indeed, I will make your righteousness to shine like the dawn (Psalm 37:6). You will be a crown of glory in my hand (Isaiah 62:3), reflecting my likeness with ever-increasing glory (2 Corinthians 4:18). I am faithful to help you to be holy (1 Thessalonians 5:24) and to complete the good work I've started in you (Philippians 1:6).

So stand firm in my grace (Galatians 5:1) and fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). When you are tempted to sin, look for the way out that I provide (1 Corinthians 10:13). Resist the devil and submit to me (James 4:7); turn away from sin and toward the good that I provide (Romans 12:21). And when you fail remember that I am waiting for you with open arms, quick to forgive you and to give you another chance (Luke 15:11-31). Satan will accuse you, but call out to Jesus and I will defend you and enable you to overcome him (Revelation 12:10-11). I will rescue your true self from sin (Romans 7:14-25) and condemnation (Romans 8:1).

Remember that the pleasures of sin are fleeting (Hebrews 11:25) and if you find your delight in me instead then you will see that I give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4) – eternal pleasures even! (Psalm 16:11) – and I do far more for you than you can imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Whatever you need, look to me and I will provide it (Philippians 4:19). I will give you love, joy, peace, and all the fruit of my Spirit to fill your soul and for you to share with others (Galatians 5:22-23).

Since I care so much for you don't worry about getting your needs met and don't worry about tomorrow (Matthew 6:25-34). Just as I look after the little sparrow so will I look after you (Matthew 10:26-31). So give your burdens to me and let me give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

continued

Talk to me when you're anxious and let me put you at peace (Philippians 4:6).

No matter what happens your soul will be safe in my hands (John 10:28). Like a mother bird I'll cover you with my feathers in my nest (Psalm 91:1-4). When rivers of difficulty roar you will not be swept away. When fiery trials blaze you will not be burned (Isaiah 43:2). When war breaks out I will be your fortress, an ever-present help in trouble (Psalm 46). Even when you face death I will take you by the hand and lead you on the joyful path to eternal life (Psalm 16:9-11).

So don't be afraid when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death because I am your Good Shepherd and I will be with you, comforting you and protecting you on your journey (Psalm 23), and I will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5).

When enemies come against you I will fight for you (Psalm 44:7). Even when you do what is right people will insult you, criticize you, and mistreat you, but I will bless you (Matthew 5:11). Even when you trust your father and mother they may forsake you, but I will receive you (Psalm 27:10). So if you find yourself poor remember that I've blessed you with true riches (Luke 6:20). And if you find yourself last in line remember that with me those who are last will be first! (Matthew 20:16). Yes, I will raise you up and exalt you when you are humble before me (Matthew 23:12).

When you are brokenhearted I will draw close to you (Psalm 34:18) and cry with you (John 11:35). I'll collect all your tears in my bottle and record each one in my book (Psalm 56:8). Like a shepherd holding his lamb, I'll carry you close to my heart (Isaiah 40:11). I'll comfort you in your time of sadness (Matthew 5:4), turning your mourning into gladness (Jeremiah 31:13) and your weakness into strength (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). I will put a happy new song in your mouth (Psalm 40:3) and give you a beautiful new name (Isaiah 62:2).

Even the difficulty and pain you experience can be to your benefit if you endure these hardships as loving discipline from me, opportunities for you to be trained in the ways of righteousness and peace (Hebrews 12: 6-11). Always remember that when you love me and seek my purposes that all things will work together for your good (Romans 8:28).

I am for you and not against you! (Romans 8:31) If I have been misrepresented to you by religious people who claim to know me but don't, (John 8:41-44) then know that I am against those hypocrites (Matthew 23). And if your earthly father has not shown you my fatherly love, then please realize that I offer you more than he ever could (Matthew 7:9-11). I am the perfect Father (Matthew 5:48), the Father from whom

all true fatherhood derives its name (Ephesians 3:15), and I love to give you good gifts (Matthew 7:11).

With me on your side your future is bright and full of hope! My plans are to prosper you and not to harm you (Jeremiah 29:11), to give you abundant life (John 10:10) now and forever (John 3:36). So call to me and I will answer you (Jeremiah 33:3); listen and you will hear my voice directing you (Isaiah 30:21); tune into your heart and you will sense my instructions (Psalm 16:7). My Holy Spirit will be your Counselor (John 14:15,26; 16:7). So don't walk alone; walk in my Spirit (Galatians 5:25), trust in me and I will direct your path (Proverbs 3:4-5) and bless you wonderfully (Ephesians 1:3).

I have gifted you to serve me in my kingdom (Matthew 25:14-23) and I want to make you great! (Psalm 18:35). So discover your gift and use it in the body of Christ (Romans 12:4-8). I have important work for you to do, work that I will help you to accomplish by working alongside you (Haggai 2:4). Together we can accomplish great dreams (Mark 10:27) and move mountains! (Matthew 17:20).

You are the light of the world so shine my light to those who are lost (Matthew 5:14). Show your love for me by loving those who are in need (1 John 3:17-18). You serve me when you feed the hungry, provide shelter for the homeless, clothe the poor, care for the sick, and visit those in prison (Matthew 25:34-40). And always be prepared to talk to the hopeless in a respectful way about the good news of my grace demonstrated in Jesus (1 Peter 3:15). Do these things for people from every nation and every language, training them to follow Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20).

But you're not just my servant: you're my friend! (John 15:15) More than that you're my beloved child! (1 John 3:1) You're precious and honored in my sight (Isaiah 43:4) and I rejoice over you with singing! (Zephaniah 3:17).

I will always love you! (Jeremiah 31:3) and nothing can ever change that! (Romans 8:38-39).

One day soon in Jesus I will return to bring you and all my followers to the heavenly home that I have prepared for you (John 14:2). I will wipe away your tears and take away your pain forever (Revelation 21:3-4) and I will reward you for all the good that you've done in my name (Revelation 22:12). Heaven will be more beautiful and wonderful than you can imagine (Revelation 21:10-27). There we will sing to God with angels (Revelation 7:9-17), feast at banquets (Matthew 22:14), and rule over cities (Luke 19:11-26).

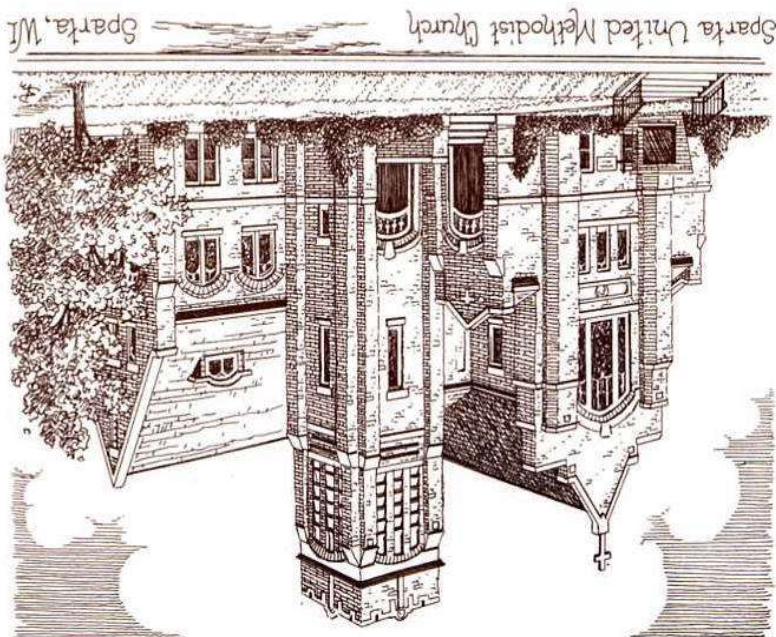
Love. God

The Chimes

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Prepared Especially For:



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SUMC Worship 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