

“The CHIMES” – April

Volume 57, No. 4

2022

Continuing the Conversation...

“So continue encouraging each other and building each other up, just like you are doing already. Brothers and sisters, we ask you to respect those who are working with you, leading you, and instructing you. Think of them highly with love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are disorderly. Comfort the discouraged. Help the weak. Be patient with everyone. Make sure no one repays a wrong with a wrong, but always pursue the good for each other and everyone else. Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation because this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11-18 CEB)



April greetings, friends!

I hope that as the days get warmer and longer you are feeling the revitalization of spring seep through your bodies. I know I’m feeling it and have been really enjoying getting out for walks on the nicer days. But, it isn’t just the spring weather having a positive effect on me; I think it has also helped that we have been able to bring back more of our ministries—like special Lenten services and soup supper. I am so enjoying meeting with people in different settings and catching up with some that I haven’t seen in a long time.

With that said, I want to build on last month’s “conversation” about continuing to meet together “for the purpose of sparking love and good deeds” and “encouraging each other” (from Hebrews 10:24-25).

It is God’s desire to gather us so we can walk together on our journey of faith—we are not meant to walk through life alone. And as God always does, he put me in mind of more Scriptures that encouraged me as I thought about our life together (I hope they encourage

you too). The first verses I came across are those from 1 Thessalonians that I quoted above.

Again, the apostle Paul tells us to encourage and build each other up, to live in peace with each other, to warn the disorderly, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, pursue the good for each other, rejoice always, and pray continually. I actually think the prayer is what empowers and guides us to do all the rest.

And I hope you notice that Paul (and I for that matter) recognize you are already doing this important work, when he says, “just like you are doing already.” Apparently, Paul realized we all need a reminder now and then of what we are called to do and of what we are already doing. Paul ends this train of thought with “this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” **Have you ever wondered what God’s will for your life is?** Well, there you go, Paul gives us the answer; God has made us for each other.

We need each other in order to grow—to help and be helped as Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 tells us: *“Two are better than one because they have a good return for their hard work. If either should fall, one can pick up the other. But how miserable are those who fall and don’t have a companion to help them up! Also, if two lie down together, they can stay warm. But how can anyone stay warm alone? Also, one can be overpowered, but two together can put up resistance. A three-ply cord doesn’t easily snap.”* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 CEB)

We need to get over the romantic notion of the “rugged individual” who doesn’t need anyone. That is just another lie the tempter wants us to buy into to keep us from God’s will and God’s best for us. God’s word is clear—we need each other.

As we are getting out more and enjoying the sunshine and warmer weather, take intentional time to notice and appreciate the people God has put in your life. Especially consider those who are different from

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you—individuals you might not automatically be drawn to. Who is in a season of life similar to yours? Who could offer wisdom? Who could offer accountability? Is there someone who can encourage you in a hard time (or who needs a kind word from you)? And then reach out to these people with God’s love.

The Christian life is at its richest when shared, day in and day out. Prayerfully ask the Lord to help you make new, meaningful, lasting connections within this family of faith called Sparta UMC (even while caring for your established connections) and in this larger community God has given us as a mission field.

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



Taking a Step in Service for Your Church

Thank you to those who have stepped up to help fill the need for **church ushers**. You are so appreciated! We could still use a few more ushers to make sure all of our entrances and the elevator are covered when worshippers are making their way into the sanctuary. In fact, maybe you would specifically like to help with the elevator; that would be awesome. If you are a youth who has some experience and would like to get back on the monthly rotation that would also be appreciated. You could help train some of the younger youth. Please talk to Pastor Loretta to get on the usher rotation.

If you find your gifts and interests lie more in the crafty area we have an important ministry you can help with. The ladies who were creating the lovely recycled **greeting cards** are no longer able to continue that important ministry. In case you aren’t aware the proceeds from the greeting cards for sale in the “Gathering Place” go to support our church missions. It is also a handy way to get a variety of very nice greeting cards at a great price. Let Pastor Loretta know if you are interested in helping with this ministry.



Spartan Outdoor Services Has Come Inside



I hope you have been noticing a cleaner, fresher look to our church building when you come in. Jason Hauser of Spartan Outdoor Services has contracted with us to clean the highest traffic areas of the church. Jason was suggested to us by Hutch who had seen a newspaper article about some of the community work Jason has done in Sparta.

After an introductory call by our trustee chair, Scott Naeseth, and some negotiation (to fit within our budget) Jason and his crew began cleaning here

in February. If you are around on Monday or Thursday afternoons you may see him working.

Say hi, and let him know his work is appreciated. He tells me he is also open to hearing if we think something is being missed in the cleaning process. Just keep in mind, within our budget constraints he is not able to do everything so you might want to check with Scott to see if Jason is contracted to do the work you think is lacking.

We also still have Aaron Leader cleaning certain areas in the church and helping Scott with some miscellaneous maintenance a couple of hours a week. Also, a big thank you to Dave Kemp for coming in a couple hours a week to help clean where needed. It takes teamwork to make a dream work.



Our Deepest Sympathy to:

The family and friends of Ben Tock who passed away on February 20. Ben was the son of Russ and Dana Tock.



Lenten and Holy Week Services

Our Wednesday evening series reflecting on Jesus' final words from the cross and our Sunday series inviting us to look at our lives in view of God's mercy toward us continue through Holy Week. I pray you are finding these services meaningful as you reflect on your relationship with God as we journey together toward Easter.

Sunday, April 3: Mercy in Service. In this service, we will look at our lives through the lens of God's love toward us in the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus. We will recognize that we are called to serve in mercy the needs of those around us by Christ's example.

Wednesday, April 6: In the chapel at 6 p.m. Jesus' words: "I Thirst"

Palm Sunday, April 10: Mercy in Palms. In this service we wave palm branches to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem, as we also witness Jesus beginning his mission of mercy for all people for the salvation of our souls.

Wednesday, April 13: In the chapel at 6 p.m. Jesus' words: "It Is Finished...Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit"

Maundy Thursday, April 14 beginning at noon: Mercy in Prayer. We will have an opportunity to pray for our world, our community, our church, our family, and our lives during a 24-hour prayer vigil. You are encouraged to sign up for a time(s) to pray in the church sanctuary or in your home for 30 minute segments as we mark the time until our Good Friday worship service. The sign-up sheet will be available at the entrance to the *Gathering Place* on Sundays after worship or you can call the office during the week and sign up with Michele (608-269-6949). Prayer guides will be available.

Good Friday, April 15 at noon: Mercy in the Cross. In this service we ponder how Jesus mercifully removed the sentence of sin against us by going to the cross to declare us not guilty.

Easter Sunday, April 17: Mercy in the Open Tomb. Hallelujah! We celebrate that Christ rose from the dead, so that we might have a new beginning that mirrors the mercy of our Lord and Savior. Hallelujah! We will once again be "Blossoming the Cross" in celebration of Christ's glorious resurrection.



Reintroducing: Family Promise



Hi Sparta United Methodist Church! I'm Tia Hewuse, the new Executive Director at Family Promise of Monroe County. I was just hired at Family Promise a couple of weeks ago and I am so excited for the future of this organization!

I have spent the past five years as a Force Support Officer in the US Air Force and have transferred from Active Duty to the Reserves this past February. I have a Bachelor's degree in Media Communication from Webster University and a Master's degree in Entrepreneurship from Oklahoma State University.

I lived in Tomah my whole life until I left for college 11 years ago. I came back home to Tomah this past year to open a group home for adults with developmental disabilities with my brother Trey who was a Special Education teacher at Tomah High School.

My life may sound busy because it is! I absolutely love to be involved in my community and never like to be bored. I have an extremely supportive family; my dad is the pastor at the Norwalk Methodist church, and they started hosting with Family Promise this year which is how I learned about the organization!

I feel so blessed to be working at Family Promise and being able to help families find a way out of homelessness and poverty. If you have any questions about Family Promise or are interested in volunteering with our mission, you can contact me at fpmcdirector1@gmail.com. I would also love to come and talk to your church groups and share my ideas for new ways we can partner together.



Be sure to get your order in for Easter flowers in honor or memory of a special someone. Order forms can be picked up during Worship or from the church office.



Shop with scrip...support your church

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the church through the shop with scrip program.

The next scrip order will be going in on **April 10**. You can mail your order directly to Cheryl Isensee at: 9262 Festival Avenue, Sparta, WI 54656. If you have questions or need an order form contact the church office.

If you find yourself in need of a card before the next order goes in give Cheryl a call; she may have the card you need on hand.



Inviting Others to be a Part

“Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened.” (Matthew 7:7)

In his book *Creating Generous Congregations*, David Heetland tells a story about an 8-year-old girl who often gave more than a tithe from her nickel and dime allowance. She once gave her grandmother 38 cents in small coins “for missions.” Her grandmother then asked her, “Do you want this to go for homeless people, hospitals in Africa, or buying fish to stock ponds to feed the hungry?”

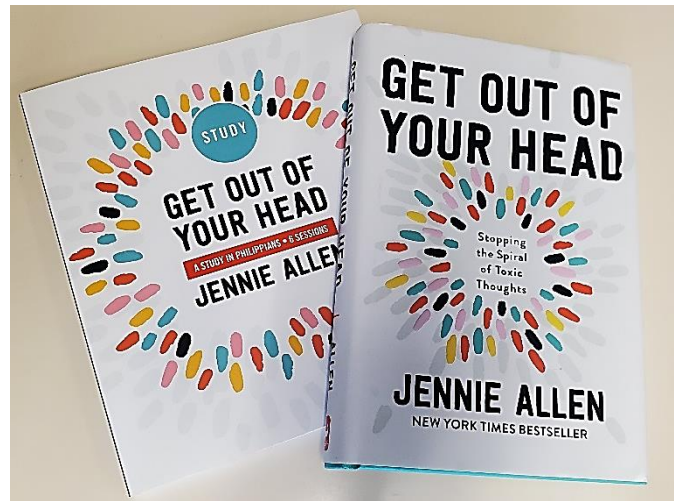
Her granddaughter replied, “Just a minute,” and returned shortly with 29 cents more, making a total of 67 cents to be divided three ways. She found each mission so important that her initial gift was instantly almost doubled so she could support all three.

Too often, we worry that when we ask someone to support a ministry with either their time or their money, the request will be taken as pushy (at best) or offensive (at worst). And there are certainly people who would take it that way.

On the other hand, I believe that not inviting people to support a ministry I’m excited about excludes them from being a part of something that may be transformational for them, and the people touched by the ministry.

Finally, there are many people who are just waiting to be asked to be a part of something bigger than them. They may not be the first to raise their hands when a general invitation goes out but would love to be personally invited to be a part of what God is doing through the church.

Rev. Jason Mahnke, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation



Get Out Of Your Head

SUMC will be offering a six-week study based on the *Get Out Of Your Head* book by Jennie Allen, a study from the book of Philippians, led by Tina Janzen. The group study will begin on Thursday nights from 6:00-7:00 starting on April 21 and end on Thursday, May 26th.

The class will be held in the large classroom. Tina has *Get Out of Your Head* books free of charge for those interested in this thoughtful and dynamic study. The cost of \$20.00 is for the consumable study guide that each participant will need. You can place your order with Tina on or before April 8, or order your own online through your favorite book seller to use during the study.

Pastor Loretta previewed the book and workbook and found them to be very helpful as she sometimes has a tendency to overthink and beat herself up in the process. She is actively using the lessons in the books to “get out of her head” and become a happier and healthier woman.

Do your thoughts ever hold you captive? Author, speaker, and teacher, Jennie Allen, knows what it’s like to swirl in a spiral of destructive thoughts, such as “I’ll never be good enough;” “Other people have better lives than I do;” “God couldn’t really love me.” But, Jennie also knows we don’t have to stay stuck in toxic thinking patterns.

As Jennie discovered in her own life, God built a way for us to escape that downward spiral. Freedom comes when we refuse to be victims to our thoughts and realize we have already been equipped with power from God to fight and win the war for our minds.

In the *Get Out of Your Head*, video-based Bible study, Jennie inspires and equips us to transform our emotions, our outlook, and even our circumstances by

taking control of our thoughts. Our enemy is determined to get in our heads to make us feel helpless, overwhelmed, and incapable of making a difference for the kingdom of God. However, when we submit our minds to Christ, the promises and goodness of God flood our lives in remarkable ways.

It starts in your head. And from there, the possibilities are endless.

Please join us for this study from Philippians, the enrollment is limited to 12.

You can call Tina at 608-259-5277 for registration and more information.



UMCOR Sunday

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Sunday is one of six special Sunday offerings of the United Methodist church that underwrites UMCOR's "costs of doing business." This helps UMCOR keep the promise that 100% of any specific gift, such as to disaster relief, will go toward that project instead of administrative cost. United Methodists have been taking part in this ministry for more than 50 years.

UMCOR brings hope to people by alleviating human suffering around the world. This includes disaster relief and supplies, meeting disaster risk reduction, health needs, and humanitarian development. It has been said that United Methodists are among the first to arrive at a natural disaster and among the last to leave.

As followers of Jesus Christ we are called to respond extravagantly as UMCOR makes a difference in communities that have been upset by storms, wars, fires, and climate change. UMCOR also addresses diseases and poverty throughout the world, assists refugees and immigrants, provides clean water, and works to reduce hunger.

You are encouraged to reflect and pray about his ministry and to participate with your generous gifts on Sunday, April 10. Your gifts truly make a difference in people's lives as relationships are built.

—Paul Foulke, Finance Chair



The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay."

Matthew 28:5-6

From the Parish Nurse...



Happy April to you---

As I wondered what to share with you for my April Chimes information, with all that is going on in my family life, I thought, this is what comes to mind.

Hospice is a passion of mine and I worked at Gundersen for 24 years. I have been so humbled and privileged that God gave me

this gift of working with death and dying—it has been such an honor.

I now find myself on the opposite side of Hospice—my oldest brother died 3 months ago on Hospice and now I have a sister-in-law on Hospice and my youngest brother on Hospice. This is a short description of it.

Hospice Care

Palliative care is often confused with hospice care, when in fact they are very different. Palliative care is a medical discipline, much like cardiac care is a medical discipline.

Hospice care is a type of health care that focuses on the comfort/quality of life for a terminally ill patient's pain and symptoms and attending to their emotional and spiritual needs at the end of life. Hospice care prioritizes comfort and quality of life by reducing pain and suffering. Hospice care provides an alternative to therapies focused on life-prolonging measures that may be arduous, likely to cause more symptoms, or are not aligned with a person's goals.

Hospice is a special model of care for patients who are in the late phase of an incurable illness and wish to receive end-of-life care at home or in a specialized care setting.

A major priority of hospice is to incorporate the principles of *palliative care* to minimize pain and discomfort in the face of advanced or terminal disease.

The essential components of hospice are—

- Ongoing communication among patients, families, and providers.
- Aggressive pain control and management of symptoms such as nausea, fatigue, anxiety, shortness of breath, tissue breakdown, and constipation.
- Medication monitoring and maintenance.
- Assistance with limited activities of daily living such as bathing.

• Advance care planning, although this is not as important as in other situations.

• Psychosocial and spiritual care.

• Grief and bereavement counseling for the patient and family.

Let us pray, “Dear Heavenly Father, You are the Almighty Creator God; holy and full of grace and love. We thank you for our friends and family members on Hospice—we thank you for this service and for those you have gifted to provide end of life issues, both physical and spiritual. This can be a fearful time for all involved. We thank You Father, that because of Jesus, You know our pain and sorrow intimately. Thank You that Jesus knows the way through this dark shadow.

Take the hand of our dear sisters/brothers and make Yourself known. Be with the family members as they struggle in “letting go” during their grief. Guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Keep that which is Your own—each one of our loved ones, and take the into eternity to be with You.

In Jesus, death is but a shadow. Jesus has swallowed up its sorrows and pain. Thank You Jesus for the cross. Thank You Jesus for the resurrection. Lord, we are before You, confessing that You are Lord of all; the gate keeper to eternal life. Your grace and love abound even as our sin seems ever increasing. Take our hands Lord and lead us through. We lay our fears at your feet. Your promise is that You—and You alone—will come to take us home.

As it says in Psalm 23:4:“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

Thank you for the comfort we find in Your presence. Through the Holy Spirit we know Your presence is with us. Send us Your peace Lord; the peace that passes all understanding. Don't let us waiver and doubt. Give us a faith that is everlasting. We release our lives into Your hands. As we wait and watch, we know Lord that none of us will escape this journey through death. Teach us how to embrace it with faith. Give us strength to hold up those who are stepping closer to seeing You face to face. Take away the fear in the heart of our loved one who will soon see You; let them find peace in Your grace, comfort in Your love, and strength in Your mighty power over death. Comfort us as our grief seems to overpower us.

You are a good, just, righteous, and loving Father. Don't let us grow bitter in this shadow of death. Help us to be so very grateful that You gave us our loved ones for the time we had with them. Pierce our hearts with a

joy that we cannot fathom or understand. A joy that is above all that is corrupted here on earth. Jesus you wept over death and so too, we weep. But it is a grief and a mourning that holds joy on the other side. You are conqueror of all; and so we trust You.

We trust that You will do what is right, what is loving. Whether in death or in life Your will is accomplished and You are sovereign. May we know Your presence, Lord. Keep us ever aware of Your loving hand guiding us through all things. In the name of Jesus we pray, amen.”

In Christ's Love,
Priscilla



Nurture Update

“I know that my Redeemer liveth!”

Wed., April 6 – Palm Sunday

Thurs., April 14 – Maundy Thursday Prayer Vigil. Noon-Thurs – noon Fri. (pray at home or church) sign up slots at “K” St. and Sanctuary.

Fri, April 15 – Good Friday services at noon.

Sun, April 17 – Easter! Blossoming of the Cross with our hearts filled with love and joyful praises, we behold our risen King! A Blessed Eater to all!

A heartfelt thank you to Patty Wiedeman, Beth Jerman and Lorie Dale for the countless repurposed cards they have beautifully fashioned over the years! They have spread sunshine, helped keep our plant “green” by recycling and contributed generously to Missions.

Please know how much your “craftiness” has been appreciated by so many – thank you very much!

Nurture Committee and the Congregation





THANK YOU: To Lori Ascher, Sara Kemp and Bob Nichols for their book donations this month. Our Little Free Library has really been used this month.

Margie Lakowske, Little Free Library Steward

A child who reads will be an adult that thinks. Unknown Author

FOR FREE: Anyone interested in a small wooden desk and office chair with arms. This is the desk and chair currently in the church library. Please contact Margie (608-269-5532) if you are interested.

RECORDS AND HISTORY COMMITTEE: We will make a decision by June 2022, if we will host *Our Community In Concert* this October. Please be patient while we navigate this year. Thank you. We are – Keeping the Eternal Flame Glowing



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.



Thank you to all who have donated to Soles4Souls! We have collected 265 pair of shoes through March!

CHANGING THE WORLD ONE PAIR AT A TIME

The shoe donation has slowed down; remember when you are doing your spring cleaning to bring in all those shoes you no longer need that are taking up precious space in your closet. Soles for Souls are always overjoyed to receive them.



General Conference Update

For those of you curious about the new date for General Conference, the Commission on the General Conference announced March 3 that the international legislative assembly — already twice postponed from May 2020 by the pandemic — could not go forward this year because of long waits for visas. General Conference draws delegates from four continents. The third postponement is regrettable but necessary.

United Methodists reacted to General Conference's third postponement — this time to 2024 — with strong emotions ranging from outrage to relief. Many also expressed weariness with the uncertainty that has faced the denomination since before the pandemic.

The hope was that The United Methodist Church's top lawmaking body would resolve the denomination's longtime debate over LGBTQ inclusion and avoid costly litigation by adopting a formal separation plan. The most endorsed of these proposals, the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation, would allow theologically conservative churches and annual conferences to leave with property and \$25 million in United Methodist funds to form a new denomination.

Now, some theological conservatives announced that they no longer are waiting for General Conference to act but launching their new denomination, the Global Methodist Church, on May 1. Even those committed to remaining in The United Methodist Church and understanding of the General Conference delay feel the frustration. Nevertheless, both the postponement and the planned new denomination's launch are leaving United Methodists across the theological spectrum with plenty of questions.

Chief among those is: Will delegates elected to the 2020 General Conference be able to serve in 2024, or will annual conferences need to elect new slates? That question will likely land before the Judicial Council, the denomination's top court. Other questions: Does United Methodist church law allow for annual conferences to leave now without General Conference's adoption of the protocol? The Council of Bishops is bringing questions related to such a possibility to the Judicial Council. The church court earlier answered questions related to the disaffiliations of individual congregations. Does the protocol remain relevant now that the Global Methodist Church is launching? General Conference always had the ability to amend or vote down the protocol. However, it remains to be seen what has happened to the legislation's support.

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If you would like to talk more about this with Pastor Loretta, she doesn't have specific answers to any of these questions but is always willing to hear your concerns. The above information was taken from a news article on the United Methodist News web site. If you would like to read the entire article you can find it at: *United Methodist News Service (umnews.org).*s



The Fox Valley Walk to Emmaus is delighted to invite you, your family and your church to attend our 15-year Jubilee that will be held on **June 25, 2022** at Sparrow's Nest, 17304 Havenwood Rd., in Sparta.

The Jubilee will begin at **11 a.m.** with a picnic followed by some activities and worship hour. With our community over 900 strong now, we hope that our members will come and enjoy a reunion with their Walk weekend friends. We also hope that our families and the greater church community will take this opportunity to get to know us and how our mission can be complimentary to your own church goals.

So, what is the Walk to Emmaus? The Walk to Emmaus is a spiritual renewal program intended to strengthen the local church through the development of Christian disciples and leaders. The Walk to Emmaus begins with a 72-hour short course in Christianity, comprised of fifteen talks by lay and clergy volunteers on the themes of God's grace, disciplines of Christian discipleship and what it means to be the church.

Walk to Emmaus is sponsored by the Upper Room Ministries, an ecumenical organization that publishes books and magazines and that produces programs to support the spiritual life of Christians around the world.

For more information, contact Jan Brantingham at cldfvwte@gmail.com or by calling 920-279-3139 or Heidi Loomis at pastorhloomis@gmail.com or by calling 406-370-1384. You can also visit their website: Foxvalleyemmaus.com.

The Walk to Emmaus mission is "Renewing Christian Disciples, Strengthening Local Churches"

Summit Spirits News...



'The Charitable Sisterhood of the Second Trinity Victory Church' is a funny and heart-warming comedy set in the Spring of 1977 in a Virginia church basement. The wonderful ensemble is made up of 5 women; all the ladies are unique and with a story to tell. They are brought together on a cold, rainy and stormy night to help organize a relief effort for homeless Guatemalans. To hear and see the

witty banter among them as they tackle this herculean task, come to the Fellowship Hall of the Sparta United Methodist Church.

DATES: Friday April 22 and 29 at 7 pm; Saturday April 23 and 30 at 7 pm; Sunday April 24 and May 1 at 2 pm.
TICKETS: \$10 for Adults; \$5 for children 10 and under and they may be purchased at the door.



Trustees meeting, April 3, immediately following Worship Service in the small kitchen

Summit Spirits meeting, April 5 at 6:30 p.m. in the library.

Nurture meeting, April 7 at 6:00 p.m. in the library.

Lois Circle will meet on April 12 at 1 p.m. in the small kitchen.

Weslyan Circle will meet on April 12 at 6:30 in the Gathering Place.

Records and History meeting April 13 at 9 a.m. in the library.

Trustees meeting, April 17 immediately following Worship Service in the small kitchen.

Thank You

Thank you to the United Methodist Women for the anniversary card as we celebrated 45 years February 25th!

John and Diane Noonan

Thank you to all for thinking of us in our time of needing prayer for the passing of our father Charles Zidich. All the money received will go to our Mission Fund at church.

The Zidich Family

Dear Friends at United Methodist,
We wanted to send a **thank you** to your congratiaion. We at Sojourners hope you all know how precisous you are to this community. Your continued support and prayers are such a blessing. We feel so cared for by you all and we just want you to know.

All our love,

Katie Bennett & Sojourners Staff & Residents

Dear Friends,

Thank you for all of the birthday greetings, cards, and gifts. You made my birthday week very special for me. I appreciate each and every one of you!

Pastor Loretta

The Backpack program through the school district is in need of some help filling the backpacks for children. There is a box in the small kitchen with sheets below listing the items they're needing. Please stop in and see if there is anything you are able to help with.



Thank you to Missions for donating \$200 to this program!

Sunday Morning Sunrise

It was a sunrise like no other
That first Easter morn.
Earth hadn't seen a more joyful day
Since Jesus Christ was born.
He appeared to those who loved Him
To prove His word was true.
His disciples' work had just begun
And there was much to do.

On Golgotha stood His blood-stained
cross,
An empty tomb down below.
An angel rolled the stone away
As the sun began to glow.
For this purpose He was begotten-
To wash our sins away
Asking only that we love Him
And seek His will each day.

He said that "It is finished-
Your sin debt has been paid!"
He would soon return to Heaven,
His Father's will obeyed.
It was a Sunday morning sunrise
That showered earth with love
As God and His angels
Rejoiced somewhere above!

Clay Harrison

Bishop's Soul Food

By Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

We become what we believe. We are shaped by our experiences. If our ideas of God come from our early experiences of relational authority, we know some of us have learned from dominant and domineering images of God. These images coincide with the pyramid, power from above to the ones below. The word dominant derives from the Latin verb, 'dominare,' which means to master or rule.

The word, 'master' has a very problematic history on American soil.

Nondominant images of God remind us that while God's love influences, humans have freedom. The love of God is an uncontrolling love. Note in Luke 15 Jesus tells a parable of a woman who sweeps and lights a lamp in a relentless search for the lost coin. In Luke 13 Jesus says he has wanted to act as a hen gathering a brood as he laments unruly Jerusalem. In Exodus 13, a pillar of cloud never left the Hebrew people as they crossed the sea. What difference might it make to our discipleship if we drew from scriptural images of God that are non-dominant?

The incarnation helps us.

"Many women were also there...they had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him" (Matthew 27:55). The Word chose to become flesh and dwell among us. To balance the images of relational influence, God gave us not only Jesus, but people, in all their diverse forms. This month we celebrate and reflect on Women's History Month.

Each year Women's History Month has a theme and the theme for 2022 is "Providing Healing, Promoting Hope." According to the National Women's History Alliance, the theme is meant to be a tribute to the work of caregivers and frontline workers during the pandemic. We are truly thankful that God has given us health care workers and caregivers for the fear and disorientation of the pandemic.

I write today to offer my deep bow to women, to encourage us to advocate for healing, and promote hope in our life-together.

The body of Christ is enriched by the gifts of women and their wholistic vision and presence among us. While we have not arrived at gender equality in society and The United Methodist Church, we can celebrate the countless beautiful contributions that have been made through the women of The United Methodist Church—and take an inventory of hope.

The Wisconsin Conference has experienced the blessings of female leadership in many ways. We give thanks for the faithful and excellent lay and clergy leadership in all aspect of our ministry and community of faith.

Wisconsin was assigned the first female Bishop elected in The United Methodist Church, and through her we were able to experience a fresh new spirit of openness and prophetic witness.

Many still recall the historic boldness when Bishop Marjorie Swank Matthews was elected (1980) as the first female bishop and came to Wisconsin. Her presence deepened our sense of the 'any-ness' and 'all-ness' of embodying spiritual leadership in our particular 'givenness'

We know that this achievement was the result of countless hidden sacrifices. She was the first woman bishop for any Protestant church and the first in Christendom since at least the twelfth century. From that perspective, the election of the first female bishop was a prophetic witness for the entire United Methodist Church, and it became a mirror for future episcopal elections in the North Central Jurisdiction. Bishop Matthews cracked the door to a more inclusive and representative church. Consider for a moment the number of lives who reconsidered the possibilities of God because of her witness.

Let us not neglect the precious history of Bishop Sharon Rader (1992-2004) and Bishop Linda Lee (2004-2012), an ebony female Bishop. These women led from their intuitive centers and established leadership norms that reset gender expectations. I thank God for them.

Returning to our theme of: "Providing Healing, Promoting Hope," our prayerful devotion must increase hope for the countless human beings in the world who are suffering from systems that continue inequality and injustice. Too many children are growing up with lead in their water pipes, food deserts, environmental contamination, and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), often referred to as "forever chemicals," that do not easily break down in the environment. These "forever chemicals" are detected in fetuses in Wisconsin, and have been linked to diabetes, cancers, and obesity (<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov>).

I am profoundly grateful to serve as the first Korean-American bishop in the beautiful and sacred flow of Wisconsin Conference history. I am proud to be the husband of my wife, who is a clergy woman. I am moved by the committed leadership of countless female clergy, who are serving in a time of pandemic. These days I hold Sydney Grace and think of the world we are called to leave her. May we be good stewards. Know that I am praying for you.

Thank you.

Peace,

Hee-Soo Jung, PhD

Bishop, Wisconsin Conference

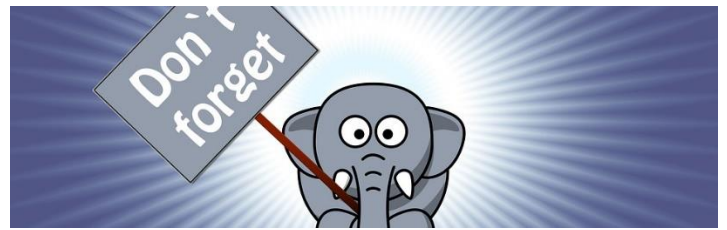


April Anniversaries

- 04 Richard & Peggy Wright
- 15 Toni & Jeff Burrows
- 16 Ron & Denise Ebert
- 21 Brandon & Brittany Burnham
- 28 Gabrielle & Brady Kozelka
- 28 Dave & Patty Wiedemann
- 29 Sara & Dave Kemp

April Birthdays

- 01 Elliot Blackdeer
- 01 John Noonan
- 03 Bev Laufenberg
- 05 Amy Johnson
- 06 Ben Simplot
- 08 Julie Adams Rodgers
- 08 Deb Foss
- 08 Darcie Hanson
- 08 Scott Naeseth
- 10 April Hubbard
- 12 Maxine Holz
- 12 Margie Lakowske
- 12 Sally Shann
- 17 Cecile Stow
- 19 Ruth Ebert
- 19 Dave Hering
- 19 Kris Jostad
- 21 Tennyson Kozelka
- 22 Danielle Dale
- 29 Ron Burnham
- 30 Margaret Jensen



April Schedules

Bakery pick-up

- 3 Dave & Sara
- 10 Priscilla & Jeff
- 17 Paul Foulke
- 24 Pat & Gail Clark

Tech Team

- 3 Ron & Kristine
- 10 Ben & Hailee
- 17 Cheryl & Cindy
- 24 Toni & Amy

Liturgist

- 3 Amy Kiefer
- 10 Toni Burrows
- 17 Priscilla
- 20 Beth Nowak

Ushers

- 3 Bob & Cathy
- 10 Kurt & Amy
- 17 Peggy Wright & Donna Burnham
- 20 John & Karen Lodico



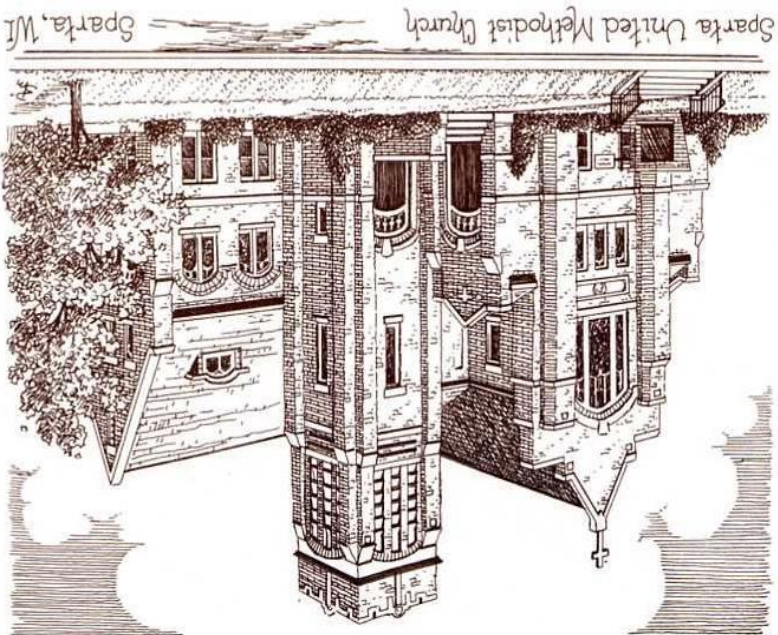
The Chimes

Sparta United Methodist Church
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SUMC Worship Schedule

In-house Service

9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings

Online Service

YouTube: Sparta UMC month day year