

# “The CHIMES” – June

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## Continuing the Conversation...

*“Therefore, as a prisoner for the Lord, I encourage you to live as people worthy of the call you received from God. Conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness, and patience. Accept each other with love, and make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you together.” —Ephesians 4:1-3*



As I pondered what words to leave you with in my final *Chimes* conversation, I decided to start with the above instructions from that master evangelist, the Apostle Paul, in his letter to the church in Ephesus. As I considered his words from Ephesians 4, I thought, “Now that is certainly a tall order!”

Knowing humanities bent toward sinning, Paul encourages us to keep the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” One only has to look at the state of the church of God through the ages to see how difficult this really is. Church history overflows with contention and church splits—some over very important differences and some over some very trivial differences.

As Christians, we are certainly not perfect people, are we? Because we still have our sin natures on this side of heaven, we will always wrestle with sin. Our main enemies remain the world and our own the flesh.

How does Paul suggest we keep the unity of the Spirit? Paul calls us to walk worthy of the calling—in other words because the Holy Spirit lives within our hearts, we are to seek to exhibit the fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) More specifically, Paul encourages us to “conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness, and patience.” As I said, that is tall order!

Our very natures cry out against such a thing. How are we to walk in humility and gentleness? Before accepting the grace and mercy of God our world literally revolved around ourselves. The world encouraged us to “take care of number one.”

Yet, that is not what we are encouraged to do as children of God and followers of Jesus. If we consider that everything we are is a result of the grace of God,

we begin to understand how to solve this problem. We walk in humility and gentleness because we are nothing apart from Christ.

And, speaking of Christ, what an example He gave to us. He came as a humble babe, whose parents did not even have a room at the inn for His birth. He lived and died as a common person with a rag tag group of followers, and yet He was the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Following His perfect example, let us pray that God would grant to us the grace to walk in true humility, gentleness, and patience.

Paul then encourages us to accept each other with love. Is that really so difficult? Yes. We are easily offended by the actions or words of others and are often very impatient with the sin we see so clearly in the lives of others. How quickly we can become puffed up with pride when we see others caught up in worldly living and sin. It can be easy to forget our own indiscretions (aka sins). It can be so easy to forget we all sin and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Even Paul spoke of the struggle with sin he faced in Romans 7:15, “For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.” This is the normal Christian life. One of the greatest joys in heaven will be the reality of being released from sin. No longer will we struggle to do God’s will instead of our own will. Our one intention at all times and in all things will be to please God who has adopted us as His beloved children through the work of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. We will truly and fully love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:28-31).

So, then, when we consider our true natures and the sins with which we all wrestle, let us pray for the grace of God that we would truly accept one another in love. Oh, that all believers today would take these verses to heart. What a difference that would make in the world for God’s kingdom.

Continue in God’s mission, dear friends, in the strength and power of Christ. I pray that God will breakthrough here and do a mighty work in and through you all, and that Christ will be glorified in you.

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

## Breakthrough Prayer

*“What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open...See, I have placed before you an open door.”—Revelation 3:7-8*

God of love and power, we know that you are with us and you are for us. Breakthrough into our lives and into your church that our relationship may flourish with you and each other.

Fill us with the grace, mercy, and power of Jesus. Help us discern where your Spirit is leading. Open doors that lead us into a new season of faithfulness and fruitfulness; of growth and service for your Kingdom; exceeding our dreams and expectations. Give us faith and courage to step through the doors that you open as we faithfully follow you, in Jesus name and for your glory. Amen.



## UWIF Update...

We witness change every day. What doesn't change is the need to continue Mission work as United Women in Faith and to recognize the generosity of our congregation and community.

Recognition and a big thank you goes to all those that helped in any way with the Spring Luncheon on April 27. Lois Circle and Wesleyan Circle members gave their time to prepare the food and set a well-appointed Fellowship Hall. Even with a decline in total number of lunches served the proceeds will help fulfill our Mission budget for local, state and global organizations via our District and State UWIF. Lunches were delivered by Ron Burnham, Scott Naeseth and Rich Ziddich. Even home grown (by Jane Hobson) white violets were sold. Jane has patience!

Each Circle will have a June dine-out or potluck. In the fall all women are welcome for a short Bible study and lengthy fellowship. Both Circles meet second Tuesday of month at church either in the afternoon or in the evening. Come check us out! You are all in our prayers for a safe and healthy summer.

Cathy Nichols, Wesleyan Circle



## Nurture Update...



**June 18** – Father's Day!

Coffee and donuts will be offered in the Gathering Place to honor our dear Dads. Their gentle strength and love are ever with us!

**Sunday School** – Thank you to our faithful teachers and helpers—Lynn & Larry Humphry, Margie Lakowske, Aubrey Ebert and

Donna Burnham, who have nurtured our children this past year! They treated all of the ladies of the church with lovely flowers on Mother's Day—thank you for your faithfulness.

Our only **high school graduate** was Tristen Blackdeer, son of Eric and Andrea Cole, and he was honored on May 21. All our best to you in the future!

Our three **confirmands**, Joshua Ebert, Maddie Tadisich and Annabelle Von Ruden, confirmed their faith on May 28. Welcome to our church family. God bless you, always!

Thank you **Sara Kemp**, for your many years of “flower planting”. You have graced the entrances of our church with your “green thumb”—it was always beautiful!

Now, we want to thank **Rose White** and **Scott Naeseth** for taking on this spring project—thanks, you two!

Stay connected to God—Stay connected to others!



## Records and History Committee Update...



We have the summer off. Our next meeting will be August 9 at 9 am in the Library.

We are looking for musicians for our October 21 concert. This is an ecumenical concert so it is not limited to just our church. If you are interested please contact Margie Lakowske at 608-269-5532.

## AI Generosity

AI (Artificial Intelligence) has been all over the news lately as technology companies begin to break new ground with things like ChatGPT. The conversation usually centers around whether AI technology will be helpful (increasing productivity), harmful (taking people's jobs), or cataclysmic (leading to machines taking over the world).

Out of curiosity, I asked one of my social media apps that has AI to tell me a story about the impact of generosity. This was its response.

"Once there was a wealthy businessman who decided to donate a significant portion of his fortune to charity. He gave to several causes, including education, healthcare, and the arts. His donations enabled many people to access opportunities they would not have had otherwise.

One of the students who benefited from the businessman's donation was a young woman who had grown up in poverty. She was able to attend college and pursue her dream of becoming a doctor. After graduating, she went on to work in a rural clinic, where she helped many people who had limited access to healthcare. The young woman's work inspired others to follow in her footsteps, and soon the clinic became a hub for community development.

The businessman's generosity had a ripple effect that touched countless lives and transformed a whole community."

I (Jason not the AI) thought that was a pretty good story. I will say, however, it is nowhere near as meaningful as stories I've heard people tell about how they were personally touched by someone's generosity or how being generous changed them. It's not just the story that's inspiring, but the personal, human element that is inspiring.

With that in mind, I'd encourage you to share stories of how your church's ministry either made a difference in your life or you have been impacted by the practice of generosity. It is through the telling and hearing real life stories that generosity spreads and lives are changed.

Rev. Jason Mahnke,  
Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

## Save the Date

August 11 - August 12, 2023

Stewardship Conference at Pine Lake

This year's theme:

*Stewardship from the Ground Up*

### New This Year!

- Friday evening "Pre-Conference Workshops" designed to give leaders a jump on their Stewardship planning.
- New schedule to accommodate lay leaders with a traditional work schedule, part-time and licensed local pastors with weekday commitments, and Elders who want to partner with more lay people in their Stewardship ministries.
- More participation options, including in-person Friday only, Saturday only, or both days, and virtual via Zoom.

**Full schedule and more details at:**

<https://www.wumf.org/upcoming-events/>

Registration opens in early May.

## 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 **June 4**. If you have questions or need an order form contact Michele at the church office 608-269-6949.

If you find yourself in need of a card before the next order goes in give Cheryl a call and ask if she has the card you need. She sometimes has a few extra scrip cards for local businesses on hand.



# thank you

My special **thank you** for Donna Burnhams assistance and hard work in helping me get the confirmation pictures back in the frames. The education wing once again is graced with the past years of smiling young faces.  
Cindy Isensee

The Records and History Committee would like to **thank** Cindy Isensee for her dedication in organizing the Confirmation pictures and to Donna Burnham for assisting Cindy in putting them all back up in the Education Wing Hall. Thank you ladies!

**Thank you** to Scott for the great mop closet you made in Fellowship Hall. Your talents are never ending. Margie Lakowske

**Thank you** to the Servant Leadership Board for your prayers and for wooden crosses you left for us in the Sunday school classroom. That was very thoughtful. Lynn and Larry Humphrey, Margie Lakowske and Aubrey Ebert.

I want to **thank** Bob and Cyndi Wise for thinking of me with the pretty altar plant.  
Thanks again, Joyce Graewin

Members of the United Methodist Church,

The Angel fund Program sends a huge **THANK YOU** for your generous donation of food items to support this important program. We are so appreciative of your continued support for this program in memory of John Harrison. Your spirit of giving continues to make the lives of our food insecure families a little less stressful. We all know that hungry hurts.

Thank you again for helping our families in need. Your generosity makes a difference for hungry families in the Sparta Area School District.

Cindy Thesing  
Nutrition Services Supervisor  
Sparta Area School District

I would like to **thank you** all from the bottom of my heart for your prayers, cards, gift cards, plants and love I've received since my accident. I continue to heal every day and am so thankful to have all of you and God on my side. I am truly blessed. ❤️  
Michele Thornton

**Thank you** for all of the cards, texts, calls and visits in the recent passing of Ardel Lakowske. Your kind words of sympathy and memorial gifts are greatly appreciated. Kevin and Margie Lakowske and our Family

Some of the folks at the Independent Living Apartments of the Morrow Home group participated in the Salad Luncheon meal presented by the UWIF group on April 27. We would like to let you know how much we enjoyed the whole meal. The meals were delivered as we requested at 11:30. Thanks Scott Naeseth. As always, the food was delicious and plentiful. **Thank you** so much for all the effort put into preparation and presentation.  
Em Axelsen and friends.



**Thank you** to the choir members this year:

Karen Joos, Julie Adams-Rodgers, Toni Burrows, Beth Nowak, Tina Janzen, Cheryl Isensee, Judy Fuhrmann, Laurie Bartholomew, Barb McGreevy, Craig

Bartholomew, Tom Hemstock, John Abbott, Scott Naeseth, Nathan Janzen  
Cyndi Wise- organist  
Ellen Hemstock -director  
Thank Ellen



## Needing a card for someone special?

You can now find new and recycled cards for all occasions: Birthdays, Anniversaries, Weddings, Thank Yous, Get Well, Sympathies and now Easter. All proceeds go to our Missions & Outreach Fund. You can find them in the Gathering Place if you'd like to check them out!

## Altar Plants



UWIF would like to thank all those who signed up for one or more plants on one or multiple dates for 2023. Each date has two lines for one plant per line. Plants are \$5.50 each or two for \$11.00. Plant money goes to Eileen Gajewsky, UWIF treasurer, who pays the invoice from Sparta Floral quarterly. At this time please continue to make your checks out to UMW.

Call the church office if you would like one or more dates(s) and Michele will add to the Altar Plant calendar in hallway.

Thank you to the volunteers who deliver plants to church and to designated recipients after a service. Plants and volunteers brighten our days.

Thank you for your continued support of UWIF,  
Cathy Nichols



The Sparta Ministerial Association is off for the summer. They will resume meeting in September.

SUMMIT Spirits will be meet on Tuesday, June 6 at 6:30 in the library.

Nurture will not meet again until August.

On Tuesday, June 13 Lois circle will be meeting at Don's Super Restaurant at 11:30 for their summer lunch.

Wesleyan Circle will meet on June 13 at Julie's house at 6:00 p.m.

Records & History will not meet again until August.

May *Chimes* newsletter deadline is Thursday, June 22 by noon.

The Study of The Acts continues on Mondays at 1 p.m. with Pastor Loretta in the library.

## Servant Leadership Board Report

This is a brief summary of the minutes submitted by Ellen Hemstock

The Servant Leadership Board (SLB) met for an extended meeting on Saturday, May 13 to discuss the zoom training "Taking Your Church to the Next Level" held on April 30. The training emphasized, "We are not the old established church, we are all new-church starts." This is not a popular idea with many, but one we have to face and plan around for ministry and mission if we want to remain vital.

We witnessed several positive changes in the past three years because of (or in spite of) Covid. Our finances remained stable when many others struggled (kudos to you—the church), we purchased and installed technology to help us present a quality and welcoming presence online, we reached out to members and friends with goody bags and Bible lesson kits for the Sunday school age children when we weren't gathering in person. It was good to remind ourselves that even when the world was "shut down" we continued to be the church in different ways.

Then we began tackling the question: where do we go from here and how do we make sure the community really knows who we are and what we offer, as this church with the lighted cross and chimes. We were reminded that everything we do should be to support our purpose and mission of "Making new and maturing disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Anything else would be a waste of time and resources.

One thing that was impressed upon on as vitally important through the April 30 training was the power of prayer for transformation and growth. So, the group in attendance decided to put that lesson into action. We each wrote notes for the Sunday school children and their teachers, and for the confirmands. We then went into the classrooms, gathered around the tables and prayed for the children and teachers. We left the notes and little prayer crosses for each one prayed for. We will be doing more of that in the future for various groups that meet in the church and even in the sanctuary for all in attendance. We will also be praying our 608 Breakthrough prayer more regularly at meetings and in worship.

You can read the full minutes on the bulletin board near the fellowship hall stairway. You are also encouraged to talk with any of the SLB members when you have questions, concerns, or if you would like an invitation to one of our regular monthly meetings.



### **June Anniversaries**

- 05 Rich & Danette Zidich
- 06 Margie & Kevin Lakowske
- 12 Cathy & Bob Nichols
- 13 Scott & Deb Thurston
- 17 Beverly & Mike Donahue
- 17 Ruth & Roger Jerome
- 17 Lori & Gary Ascher
- 20 Dot & Dave Hering
- 23 Michael & Teresa Brown
- 23 Judy & Allen Erickson
- 25 Lorie & Richard Dale
- 25 Dick & Eileen Gajewsky
- 25 Priscilla & Jeff Hemmersbach
- 25 Rose White & Scott Naeseth
- 27 Cory & Alex Rudie
- 30 Berndt & Mary Borreson

### **June Birthdays**

- 06 Amara Echeverria
- 09 Alex Vaver
- 10 Rich Zidich
- 11 Erin Tadisch
- 12 Aubrey Ebert
- 12 Edwina Olson
- 13 June Jackson
- 14 Katie Jerman
- 17 Clarice Stuessel
- 17 Patty Wiedemann
- 19 Scott Herrman
- 22 Danette Zidich
- 26 Russell Culpitt
- 29 Larry Humphrey
- 30 Deanna Hutchinson



### **Bakery pick-up**

- 4 Pat & Gail Clark
- 11 Donna Burnham
- 18 Judy Fuhrmann
- 25 Ron & Denise Ebert

### **Tech Team**

- 4 Ben & Hailee
- 11 Ron & Cindy
- 18 Amy & Cheryl
- 25 Cheryl & Cindy

### **Liturgist**

- 4 Cheryl Isensee
- 11 Judy Fuhrmann
- 18 Marty Walley
- 25 Amy Kiefer

### **Ushers**

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



CHANGING THE WORLD  
ONE PAIR AT A TIME

**Thank you** to all who have donated to Soles4Souls!  
We have collected 185 pair of shoes through May!

# Join us in celebrating Pastor Loretta's retirement!



After the service,  
June 25  
In Fellowship Hall

Hamburgers, brats, drinks and  
place settings will be provided.

Please bring a dish to pass.





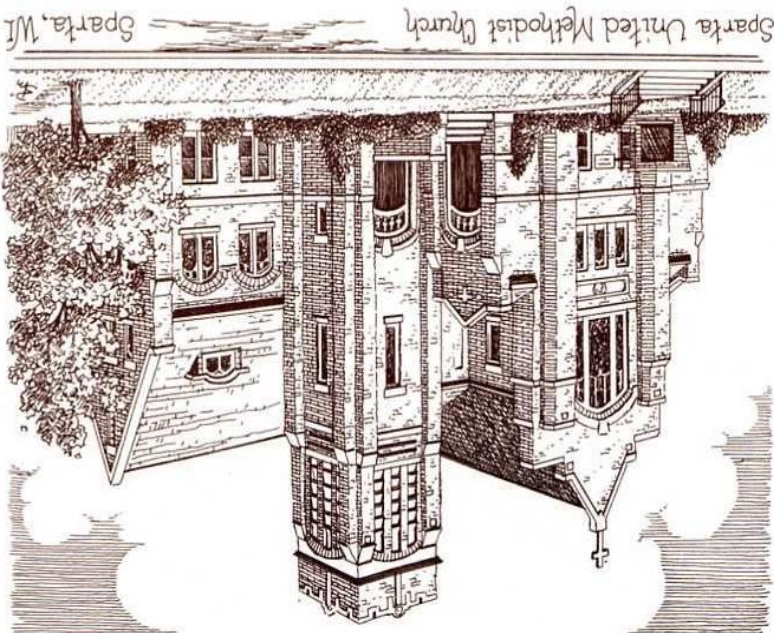
# The Chimes

Sparta United Methodist Church  
210 N Court Street  
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

*Prepared Especially For:*



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## **SUMC Worship Schedule**

### **In-house Service**

9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings

### **Livestream Service**

9:00 a.m. on Facebook

### **Online Service**

YouTube: Sparta UMC month day year