

“The CHIMES” – February

Volume 57, No. 2

2022

Continuing the Conversation...

“The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13

“Go your way... for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10



As I get older it seems I find myself pondering the meaning of life and my purpose in life more often. That’s where I find myself as I write this month’s letter to you—preparing to hit a milestone birthday next month and pondering.

Because it doesn’t seem as daunting as “the meaning of life” I want to focus on my purpose as a pastor. This is not a vocation that I chose—I was very happy and fulfilled in my previous work—but God chose me to be a pastor. The call from God into pastoral ministry was confirmed by my home church (and through many people and circumstances along the way). That doesn’t mean I somehow became all-knowing, all-powerful, and was endowed with the power to be present everywhere. Those are God’s attributes alone.

I’m still a fallible human being who was called by the infallible God to use my God-given gifts as a pastor. As I pondered my purpose, I went straight to God’s word and came across God’s job description for pastors: *“...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”*

That is a broad description for the work of a pastor. If you are reading this letter and have been involved in

the United Methodist Church for any length of time, you are well aware that pastors do not come in a pastor-shaped, cookie cutter form. Just like other people in the church (the body of Christ) pastors come to a church bringing their specific gifts for ministry with the hope of using them for the common good and for the glory of God. If you would like to know what I believe my strongest gifts for ministry are, ask me; I would love to talk with you.

For the church, especially those in the UMC, it can be disconcerting as you just get used to one pastor’s gifts and leadership style, you find yourself welcoming and learning to live with a new pastor. It’s times like this when God may be asking you—as a member—to grow in your faith walk or trust that God is doing a new thing, in a new time, and has sent you a pastor with the gifts to help you maneuver through this particular time (or both). All this while remembering your pastor is not perfect, just called to a particular vocation.

Being a pastor is not easy, for many reasons—and please understand, I am not complaining. Most days I love what I do and the folks I am called to minister with. On the more difficult days I rely on the joy of the Lord to be my strength, prayer partners to uphold me, and I pray even harder for God’s wisdom and grace.

One of the more difficult parts of being a pastor, from my perspective, is that as a pastor I no longer hold a membership in a local church. There is so much to be missed in that and I feel sad for church members who don’t take full advantage of their important position in the body of Christ—the church.

Pastors are not left totally without a church body for support—our church is the conference we belong to. For me that is the Wisconsin conference. I am not able to meet with my “church” weekly but look forward to those times when “the conference” meets to worship, learn, and conduct business under the leadership of our bishop. Those times can seem too few and far between. Does that mean I always agree with the leadership of the conference? No. Does it mean that I always see eye-to-eye with my colleagues in the conference? No. Does it mean I respect them, pray for them, and appreciate them? Yes, because they are also fallible human beings and I trust in God and God’s purposes.

continued...

As with folks in the local church, pastors are also expected to serve in various capacities in our church—the conference. If you are curious, the committees I serve on for the conference are the District Committee on Ministry (as member, chair, and mentor), the United Methodist Foundation Board (as chair of the education and development committee and sometimes presenter), and the District Strategy Board (as member). I share this with you to emphasize how important I believe it is to be active in your church as you use your God-given gifts for the common good of Christ’s body—the church—and bring glory to God.

So, when you are asked to serve in the local church in various capacities please understand you are not being asked to do something I don’t do myself. More importantly, you are being asked to use your God-given gifts for the common good of this church body. If you are feeling called to serve and have not been asked, please talk to me and together we will find your place of service (remember, I am not all-knowing). I firmly believe that each and every one of us has an important part to play in service to God and for the common good of Christ’s body—the church.

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

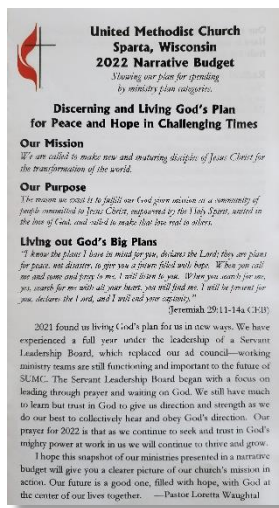
Welcome to the Family

On Sunday, January 9, Annabelle, Bridget, Zhoey, and Harper Von Ruden were baptized. The girls are pictured with mom and dad, Emily and Brandon. They are the granddaughters of Dennis and Julie Hanson. Welcome to the church family girls!



2022 Church Budget

Please take some time to read the “narrative budget” that is included with this edition of “The Chimes.” If you receive the newsletter electronically, you will receive the narrative budget as a separate document. It lays out our proposed budget in a way that tells our story of ministry through words and pictures, and how our finances provide for the work that we do as a church. If you have any questions please contact Pastor Loretta in the church office or Paul Foulke (finance chair) at 715-554-0246.



If you are someone who processes better with a line-item budget you can see that posted on the bulletin board near the main entrance to the fellowship hall; the same bulletin board where meeting minutes are posted.

Our Deepest Sympathy to:

The family and friends of Margaret Chenoweth who passed away Friday, December 17.

Superbowl of Stewardship

What is your stewardship game plan? Attend this seminar to make the right calls!

The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation presents the Superbowl of Stewardship on Saturday, February 12 at Algoma Boulevard United Methodist Church in Oshkosh.

Workshops include: The Purpose of a Stewardship Plan; *We Aren't Broke—Uncovering Hidden Resources for Mission and Ministry* (register by January 31 to receive a copy of the new book by Rev. Mark Elsdon); The Importance of Planned Giving; Year-round Stewardship Planning; How to Thank and Recognize Your Donors; and Celebrating What You Have and Telling the Story. This seminar will benefit pastors, finance teams, stewardship teams, lay leaders, council members, and accountable leadership boards.

The cost to attend is \$20 per person or \$50 for three or more attendees from the same church. Get your team together and save some money while planning for the church's future! The cost includes lunch and materials. Stewardship and Finance Committees are especially encouraged to participate but all are welcome.

Register online at wumf.org by February 5 (or by January 31 to receive a copy of Rev. Elsdon's new book). The full agenda for the seminar is posted on the church bulletin boards or you can see it at wumf.org.



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 **February 13**. 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 Pastor Loretta at the church (269-6949) or on her cell phone at (608-386-1862). 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.



An Attitude of Gratitude Makes a Big Impact

Most of the time it seems as if making a positive change in your life takes a lot of discipline, time, and effort. This makes sense. If quick and easy fixes really led to things like better physical and mental health, financial wealth, and problem-free relationships—we'd all be rich, deliriously happy, and well-adjusted. We do know that life isn't that easy or simple.

But, what if one word was able to improve both your physical and mental health, give you more and better friends, and help you accomplish more? Such a word does exist. It is GRATITUDE.

A 2014 article from Forbes outlines seven benefits of showing gratitude:

1. Gratitude opens the door to more relationships. When we say thank you or express appreciation to someone we've just met, the person we thank is more likely to seek an ongoing relationship.
2. People who express gratitude experience fewer aches and pains and they report feeling healthier than people who do not express gratitude
3. Gratitude improves psychological health. Research confirms that gratitude effectively increases happiness and reduces depression
4. Gratitude reduces aggression and increases both sensitivity and empathy.
5. Grateful people sleep better.
6. Gratitude increases a person's self-esteem and reduces resentment toward people who are perceived as having more.
7. Gratitude increases mental strength. Studies indicate that people who are grateful respond to trauma and tragedy with greater resilience and strength. Recognizing all you have to be thankful for – even during the worst times of your life – fosters resilience.

How can you nurture an attitude of gratitude?

- Consider creating a gratitude journal, taking time each day to write out what you are grateful for.
- Surround yourself with "gratitude cues," which are notes or visual reminders of what you must be grateful for, set in places where you will see them throughout the day
- During your daily prayer time, be sure to include time to give thanks.
- Begin practicing mindfulness. Mindfulness and gratitude are connected.

continued...

Yes, we may find that being grateful is neither easy nor simple, especially during difficult times. But I believe its impact on our lives is well worth the effort.

Rev. Jason Mahnke, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation



From the Parish Nurse...

Remember February is Black History Month—and Black History is America’s History. We must celebrate the accomplishments of our Black Americans—which has often been “left out” of our history books or forgotten. It is important for all of us to

know, learn about, understand and support our black brothers and sisters.

Forgiveness is Good for Your Health

“Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine and good things in others. Think about all the things you can praise God for and be glad about” (Philippians 4:8).

I read a book review of *Forgive for Good: A Proven Prescription for Health and Happiness*. After five years of research, the authors found that people who forgive have decreased stress and fewer physical symptoms of stress. They experience greater physical vitality and feel less hurt and anger.

The authors concluded that the problem with grudges is that each time we think about the hurt or anger at the heart of the grudge, it’s a reminder of the helplessness we felt when it occurred. They recommend nine steps for moving towards forgiveness.

1. Know exactly how you feel about what happened.
2. Forgiveness is for you. Make a commitment to do what you need to feel better.
3. Seek peace — not necessarily reconciliation — with the person(s) who hurt you.
4. Get perspective and recognize that distress comes from hurt feelings and thoughts, and not what hurt you in the first place.
5. When you feel upset, redirect your thoughts to that which is positive.

6. Give up expecting things from other people that they choose not to give you.
7. Instead of mentally replaying the hurt, seek new ways to get what you want.
8. Focus on goodness, love, and beauty.
9. Remaining in the hurt only gives power to the person who hurt you.
10. Rewrite the story of the grievance in your mind so you can focus on the heroic choice to forgive.

It seems to me that this is much the same advice that the Apostle Paul was giving in Philippians 4:8. Someone said, “The practice of forgiveness is the most important contribution to healing the world.” What do you think?

It begins with us. How about you? Holding on to any grudges? Forgiveness is good for your health! Want to help heal the world? It begins with you.

Let us pray:

Our Heavenly Father, You have given us all the principles for our health and the healing of the world. You know that we always see how others need to change, but it is our attitudes that will begin to effect change. Your grace is sufficient for each one of us. Thank You that Your Holy Spirit will give us the will and the power to forgive wholeheartedly. Amen.



Nurture Update

“Stay connected to God—stay connected to others.”

Thank you to all who purchased “Light the Night” luminaries for Christmas Eve in honor or in memory of loved ones. \$220 was given to Heifer International—the B.A.S.H. mission project. The front of our church looked beautiful, with 65 luminaries “lighting the night”!

March 2—Ash Wednesday
Lenten devotionals will be available

“It is not how much you do, but how much love you put in the doing.”

—Mother Teresa



Leadership Workshop Update

The annual leadership workshop held in January and led by Pastor Loretta and Toni Burrows, Servant Leadership Board chair, was very fruitful. Pastor and Toni want to thank those in attendance (both in-person and virtually) for the great conversation and brainstorming for our ministry plan going forward. The Servant Leadership Board (SLB) will now take all of the ideas shared and work on forming a working ministry plan to bring back to the larger church for finalization. Keep the conversations coming and stay tuned.

Those in attendance who are not part of the current Servant Leadership Board got a feel for how the board conducts the business of the church. As a reminder, here is still an open member-at-large position on the SLB. If you are interested, please let Pastor or Toni know so we can fill the position. We usually meet once a month and try to keep the meetings right about an hour. Remember, we are all part of the church body and we need to hear from all parts of the body to be our authentic self.



THANK YOU: To Ellen Hemstock, Jeanine Houtvelde, Sara Kemp and Cathy Nichols for continuing to add to our book supply for the Little Free Library! Your contributions are keeping many minds and hand busy during these long, cold days. Margie Lakowske, Little Free Library Steward

New Year's Resolutions: For those of you that want to tackle reading the Bible this year, there are two copies of *The Bible in 365 Days*. They are located on the table in the Gathering Place. Unlike our other library books, this can be checked out for the entire year. Keep this New Year's resolution. Margie Lakowske, Church Librarian



7 Spiritual Practices for the New Year

By Jayne Davis on January 11, 2022

Jayne Davis suggests a few spiritual practices that can help anchor you to God and bring joy, meaning, and deep rest in the coming New Year. They include gratitude, wonder, Sabbath, and asking questions while deepening your relationship with God and others.

There is something very empowering about a new year — a clean slate, a fresh start. Whether you enter this new year energized and ready to reimagine how life might be different in the coming days and months or whether you have barely crawled your way up onto the shore of a new year, gasping for breath, shipwrecked and weary from the storms of the past year, I offer you a few thoughts on spiritual practices that may help to anchor you in God and bring you joy, meaning, and deep rest in the coming year, whatever it may bring.

We can't create wonder, but we can put ourselves in a position to experience it, with humility, openness, expectation; praising God for who God is and wondering what God will be up to next.

1. Practice gratitude. It is easy to get caught in the spin cycle of the chaos that surrounds us, to grow weary and frustrated and overwhelmed in a time when so much feels out of control. Gratitude is a spiritual practice that helps us to take a step back, to maintain perspective that there is much good amid the challenges, and to remind ourselves of the many ways that God is present and providing for us. Consider beginning or ending each day by writing down three things for which you are grateful. An intentional practice of gratitude shapes the lens through which we see the world — a world of abundance or scarcity, a world of threat or of promise.

2. Cultivate wonder. The difference between gratitude and wonder, to me, is that wonder often catches me by surprise. It is a gratitude that washes over me. You come around a curve on the Blue Ridge Parkway and see the expanse of mountain ridges layered one beyond the next in hazy blue hues. It is the multitude of stars appearing in the night sky or the sudden, impulsive hug of a small child around your knees. It is the innovation of an underground park on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, migrating Monarch butterflies filling the sky, the unexpected word of grace from a crusty old soul. Awe. Wonder. Hope. Imagination. We can't create wonder, but we can put ourselves in a position to experience it, with humility, openness, expectation; praising God for who God is and wondering what God will be up to next.

continued...

3. Make room for Sabbath My best friend is an Orthodox Jew. “When I light the Sabbath candles on Friday night, I can feel myself exhale,” she told me. Whether you have rushed to get everything done before you are cut off from work and the office and household chores, or whether you have entered gently into this moment, the exhale is there, she said. The body, the mind, and the spirit know — this is their time. And collectively, they rest.

Wouldn't you love to know what that feels like? To have separation between the ordinary and the holy? Start with five minutes a day if you are convinced that is all you can muster. Set the alarm on your phone to go off at noon and then stop; stop for five minutes and sit before God, resting in God's presence, received not for what you do or what you bring, but simply for who you are. Let your whole self-exhale.

4. Ask great questions. There are benefits to being the dumbest person in the room. I am not talking about intelligence; I'm talking about listening from a posture of not knowing, of curiosity. It is a skill that every good coach knows. So often as ministers we feel like we must have all the answers, or at least act like we do. But when we give ourselves permission to ask questions, instead of offering answers, we get to journey with our people on their own road of discovery.

Think about the questions Jesus asked his disciples. “What do you want?” “Who do you say that I am?” Questions that provoked thought and internal wrestling. Jesus did not manipulate them to a predetermined answer but gave them space to make their faith their own, to develop the internal understanding that leadership required of them.

5. Be uniquely you. If we are just like everyone else, what's the point? Truth is, God has made you unique. You have a combination of gifts, personality, sphere of influence, way of seeing the world like no one else. And the world needs to see how God is reflected through you, the real you. Trust that you are enough, just the way you are.

6. Notice God. “Where have you seen God today?” It's a simple question that a friend of mine taught me to start asking myself at the end of the day, a question that I commend to you as well. We see what we expect to see, for better or for worse. We are shaped by what we notice, what we look for — in others and in the world.

7. Share the journey. Few things will take a toll on your spirit and your ministry like isolation. You may know this all too well. I speak with too many ministers who are despairing. It's a strong word, but it is the one that they choose. The common thread among these

ministers is isolation. If this is your story, make 2022 the year that is going to be different. Commit now to building a support system. Identify a trusted lay leader, another pastor in town or in the next city or of a different denomination. A friend who is not connected to ministry at all. We are shaped for community to carry one another's burdens; to offer a voice of hope or reason when one is going off the rails; to give perspective when the thoughts in our head have become all consuming. It does not have to be therapy; it may just be coffee. Someone else may need your voice as much as you need theirs, maybe for different reasons. Share. Laugh. Breathe.

God's mercies are new every morning. May you experience the abundance of God's grace and God's joy as you seek him and serve him in the year ahead.



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 148 pair of shoes through January!

CHANGING THE WORLD
ONE PAIR AT A TIME





Dear Church Family,

Thank you for the lovely poinsettia plant to help celebrate our 46th wedding anniversary. We are truly grateful for your thoughts and love.

Tim & Judy Fuhrmann

Church Fellowship,

Families First Board of Directors and staff thank you for your kindness and generosity. Your donation will be used directly to benefit those who need it the most in Monroe County through empowering services. Please see our website on how you have positively impacted our community. www.familiesfirstofmonroecounty.org and on Facebook!

Families First of Monroe County

Dear Friends,

We sincerely thank you for your generous donation. You are a valued partner in our belief that everyone deserves health care.

Best regards,

St. Clare Health Mission of Monroe County

Dear Sparta United Methodist Church;

Thank you for your generous gift supporting Children's Vision International, of \$100 during 2021.

God Bless you all,

Children's Vision Int. Inc.



Summit Sprits will meet Tuesday, February 1 at 6:00 p.m.

Nurture Committee will meet Tuesday, February 3 at 6:00 p.m. in the library.

Lois Circle will meet Tuesday, February 8 at 1:00 p.m. in the small kitchen.

Wesleyan Circle will meet on Tuesday, February 8 at 6:30 at the church.

Records & History committee will meet Wednesday, February 9 at 9:00 a.m. in the library.



News From Around the Conference

Bishop's Convocation of Laity Leadership 2022 Online Event via Zoom,

Saturday, February 12, 2022, 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

All are invited to join us in connecting with our Conference Lay Leadership. Please invite others in your congregations to join us!

Bishop Jung has asked all participants to have read John Wesley's sermon "*The Unity of the Divine Being.*" Registration deadline is February 11, 2022, at noon.

Sponsored by the Conference Board of Laity. For questions about the event, contact Ben Brancel at brancelangus@gmail.com. No cost to join the event but you need to be registered.

Wisconsin Conference UMW Mission u 2022 Building Communities of Hope and Joy—COMMUNITY is God's desire for us! Join us at Mission u 2022 as we reflect on the community that Jesus is calling us to be! The newly designed Mission u 2022 is more flexible than ever. You may choose to do an in-person class or a Zoom class.

This year, as we study Luke 13, we find ourselves in a period of disruption and uncertainty. In the midst of a devastating pandemic, divisive political climate, unaddressed systemic racism, ecological crises and economic turmoil, we turn to the stories of Jesus that have anchored Christian communities for two millennia.

Our hope is that we will leave Mission u with a bigger and broader vision of the community Christ is calling us to be in times of loss, grief and massive disruption. What would be possible if we tended to the needs of our communities in small yet radical ways, as Jesus did in Luke 13? Our newly designed Mission u 2022 is more flexible than ever. You may choose to do an In Person class or a Zoom class. The text for the class, *Who Can We Be Together?* will be available soon.

In Person Mission u 3-day class Thursday evening to Saturday afternoon July 28—July 30, 2022 Christ United Methodist Church Watertown, WI

ZOOM Mission u 4 evening sessions Tuesdays and Thursdays July 12 and 14, 2022 July 19 and 21, 2022 in your home or chosen location.

continued...

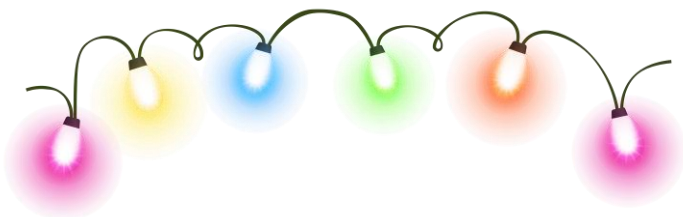


February Anniversaries

- 04 Penny & Kevin Eddy
- 09 Wayne & Amy Johnson
- 17 Russell & Melissa Culpitt
- 25 Grenda & Gale Rugg
- 25 John & Diane Noonan

February Birthdays

- 02 Tom Houtevelde
- 02 Stephanie Ochoa
- 03 Peggy Wright
- 06 Angelyna Talsky
- 08 Toni Burrows
- 10 Emily Ascher
- 10 Dean Olson
- 11 Laurie Graber
- 11 Sara Kemp
- 12 Klynn Friemoth
- 13 Jeff Hemmersbach
- 13 Liam Huntington
- 15 Lorie Dale
- 15 Brady Kozelka
- 20 Rose Starkey
- 22 Melissa Goodenough
- 22 Sarah Rodriguez
- 22 Russ Tock
- 25 Mara Culpitt
- 25 Brian Hemstock
- 25 Jane Hobson
- 27 Peyton Hale



February Schedules

Bakery pick-up

- 6 Paul Foulke
- 13 Pat & Gail Clark
- 20 Donna Burnham
- 27 Judy Furhmann

Tech Team

- 6 Cheryl & Cindy
- 13 Ben & Hailee
- 20 Ron & Kristine
- 27 Toni & Amy

Liturgist

- 6 Amy Kiefer
- 13 Priscilla Hemmersbach
- 20 Beth Nowak
- 27 Marty Walley

Ushers

- 6 Bob & Cathy
- 13 Kurt & Amy
- 20 Peggy Wright
- 27 Dick & Eileen



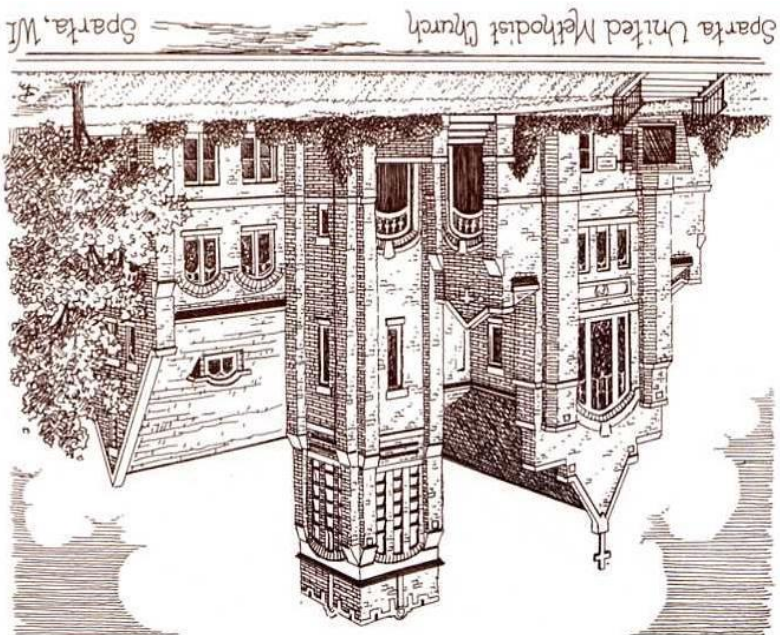
The Chimes

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Prepared Especially For:



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

Phone: (608)269-6949

Fax: (608)269-6940

Email: office@spartamethodist.com

Website: lewaughnal.wixsite.com/spartaumc

SUMC Worship Schedule

In-house Service

9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings

Online Service

YouTube: Sparta UMC month day year