

# “The CHIMES” – August

Volume 57, No. 8

2022

## Continuing the Conversation...

*“I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise...Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me. The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.”* (Psalm 138:1, 7-8)

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”* (Matthew 6:33-34)

After taking time to recover from COVID and process my time at Annual Conference I want to share with you some of my thoughts on one of the action items that was passed.

The action item was presented by the Wisconsin Conference Disaffiliation Task Force. The task force was developed after the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference of the UMC adopted legislation establishing the limited right of a local church to petition its annual conference to disaffiliate from the denomination. Reasons for disaffiliation relate to our United Methodist stance on sexual orientation and changes that may or may not take place at the General Conference in 2024. This limited right to disaffiliate expires December 31, 2023.

Local churches seeking to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church during this limited timeframe are required to fulfill the approved ten-step process, which includes full payment of all financial obligations specified in the process by December 31, 2023. The action we voted on is a ten-page document so I’m not going to try and share every detail here, but if you would like to read it I am very happy to share it with you.



The first required step is an initial conversation making the District Superintendent aware that the church is interested in and meets the criteria for disaffiliation under the specifications of the 2019 Special Session. This step must be completed by September 1, 2022.

I want to be upfront and say I don’t see our church going this route, but I don’t want anyone to feel like they were left in the dark about this limited time action or that I am not open to discussing it. When all is said and done, after the completion of all ten steps we would need a 2/3 vote of the professing membership present at a church conference to support disaffiliation.

Although I have not polled everyone in the church, I feel like I have talked with a large enough base of active members to realize we have faithful, Bible-believing, God-honoring Christians who fall along a continuum from liberal/progressive to fundamental/conservative and many points in between. Some of the differences between liberal and conservative beliefs occur within families. You have lived, worshiped, worked, served, loved, mourned, and celebrated together for many years before I came on the scene; even with your different views.

I can’t imagine coming to you now with a line drawn in the sand and asking you to pick a side, which would potentially leave us with a minority of winners, a minority of losers, and a minority of lost and hurt people in between. If you believe strongly that I am wrong, please let me know. I am not trying to shut down conversation, but I also don’t want to stir something up that will only bring futility.

I want to be clear that just because I am not encouraging you to go one way or the other, it doesn’t mean that I don’t have strong beliefs about God, my relationship with God, and our faith—I do. As I interact with people I do my best to listen to where they are in their faith walk, I encourage as seems appropriate, and I try to ask questions that might open individuals to consider God in deeper ways. If I have ever come to a church with an agenda, that agenda is to share the Triune God as best I can, because God is the one who brings transformation to our lives through the life and work of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is a time of discernment for all of us—you as the church and me as a pastor. I guess a question we need to consider is, can we continue to live in a kind of holy tension between our liberal and conservative beliefs? Can we continue to love and serve God with people who don't believe exactly the same way we do?

I believe our Christian faith allows for that kind of holy tension when we have shared basic beliefs about God and then allow God to sort out the details in our individual lives. As the church, our main purpose is to do our best to faithfully follow Jesus and fulfill his great command and commission to love our neighbors and make disciples of Jesus. What does this look like for you?

Serving and leading in Christ's love!  
Pastor L



### Called to Service for Christ

When we become church members of a United Methodist Church, we pledge to support the church with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Sparta UMC provides many opportunities for you to serve and witness to your faith.

We will soon be entering the final one-third of 2022, which will be the time this congregation invites people to step forward in ministry to the church as we prepare for charge conference.

If you are interested in moving Sparta ahead in these changing and challenging times please pray about serving on the servant leadership board. There is a need for three new members in 2023. If you feel called in this direction see Pastor Loretta for more information. Also if you would like to recommend someone for this position contact pastor with your suggestions.

The church also needs a new Finance chairperson, as I will be stepping down at the end of the year.

Other areas of need are the BASH program (aka Sunday school) as well as the social concerns/missions team, usher/greeter team, and soup supper teams. If you have a passion for any of these areas, or others not listed, pray about becoming a team member. If you are not sure where you might fit in ask Pastor Loretta; she will answer any questions she can or connect you with someone who is already serving.

As our church moves forward, Christ calls us to be disciples through serving and sharing our gifts. What gifts can you bring to Sparta UMC?

—Paul Foulke



### Church Facebook Page

Have you checked out the church's Facebook page? 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:  
[www.facebook.com/UMCsparta/](http://www.facebook.com/UMCsparta/). Once you are there just "like" the site and you will receive updates when new information is posted.



### Choir Members Needed



Do you love to sing? Perhaps you would like to share your talents with the church in the choir? Ideally, we would love to have choir members who can read music, but if you have the call to join us and love to sing, contact Ellen Hemstock at 608-633-0889 or [ellen.hemstock@gmail.com](mailto:ellen.hemstock@gmail.com).

We are thinking of starting a choir again this fall. The choir would sing at least two Sundays of the month and would rehearse on Wednesday evenings from 7–8 p.m. We will sing contemporary Christian choral music and would start in September. I look forward to hearing from former choir members as well as those who would like to get started with the choir.

Ellen Hemstock, Director.



Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Marge Laack, mother of John Noonan, who passed away Sunday, July 17.



## A Chicken or an Eagle?

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)*

Once upon a time, a man found the egg of an eagle. It had been abandoned for some reason by its mother, but as it was still warm, the man took it and put it in the nest of one of his backyard chickens along with the other eggs that were there being brooded upon.

After a period of time, the eaglet was hatched, and along with the other chicks from his next began to go about the back yard doing what the other chicks did. He scratched the earth for worms and insects. He looked for the corn that the man would throw into the yard. He clucked and cackled as best as he could, and as he grew, he would, like other chickens, thrash his wings and fly a few feet in the air.

Years passed in this way, and the eagle grew very old. One day he saw a magnificent bird far above him in the cloudless sky. It glided majestically among the powerful wind currents, soaring and swooping, scarcely beating its long golden wings.

The old eagle looked at it in awe and asked, “What is that?”

“That is the eagle, the king of birds,” said one of his neighbors. “He belongs to the sky and to the high places. We belong to the earth, we are chickens.” The old eagle knew this was true, and so it was he lived and died as a chicken, for that is what he believed he was.

In life, our perspective determines our reality. For instance, most people believe that they need more money to be “okay” financially. How much more? It didn’t matter if they were making \$25,000 or \$250,000, the answer to how much more they needed was always right around 10% more. The truth is, if we haven’t learned how to manage well what we have, having more will leave us with the same set of problems

On the other hand, developing an attitude of gratitude, an abundance mindset, and planning for giving and saving in our spending plans (aka, budgets) can help us discover contentment no amount of money can give.

Rev. Jason Mahnke, WI United Methodist Foundation

## 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 **August 14**. 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

608-269-6949 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.



## Stewardship Conference at Pine Lake

The Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation is once again offering an in-person stewardship conference at Pine Lake Camp. It will take place Friday, August 12 and Saturday, August 13. This year’s theme is **“Stewardship as the Dust Settles.”** The full retreat will go from 10 a.m. Friday until 1:30 p.m. on Saturday. They also offer a “Drive-in Session” 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Friday if you can’t stay for the entire retreat.

The retreat offers a variety of interesting topics around stewardship for the church as we come out of the pandemic. Our very own Pastor Loretta will be leading a session on Saturday morning entitled *“Say What? Invitational Language and Messaging.”* There will also be books for sale on a variety of stewardship topics.

Please consider attending all or part of this interesting and fun conference. You will enjoy the bonus of spending time at beautiful Pine Lake Camp. Watch for more details or feel free to ask Pastor L questions about the retreat. You can find more information or register online by going to the foundation website at [www.wumf.org](http://www.wumf.org) and clicking on the Stewardship Conference link.

## Records and History Committee

We will meet on Wednesday, August 10 at 9 a.m. in the church library. Please bring any updated information regarding *Our Community in Concert* to our meeting.

Just a reminder that we are planning on hosting *Our Community in Concert* on **Saturday, October 22 at 2 p.m.** in the sanctuary. This is free of charge. If you would like to be a participant, please let one of the committee members or the church office know. Anyone interested in ushering/greeting or running the elevator please let me know. Thank you, Margie Lakowske



Thank you!

**THANK YOU:** The Little Free Library patrons have had a variety of new books to read, thanks to Sara Kemp and Bev Laufenberg and an anonymous donor, as there was no name on the bag that was left in the library. Thank you for always thinking of us when you donate books!

I want to take time to thank you for your support as I was taking classes to get my license for Chaplaincy. Those that wrote letters for me, the lovely plant in my honor from UMC, the cards, calls, and the many "congratulations"—it meant so much to me. With love, Priscilla

**Thank you** for the birthday card and gift. I was very touched by the thoughtfulness.--Tim Waughtal



**Thank you** to all who have donated to Soles4Souls!

We have collected 844 pair of shoes through July!

CHANGING THE WORLD  
ONE PAIR AT A TIME



**Pizza and a movie** night this month is **August 20**. Pizza will be served in the small kitchen at 6 p.m. with the movie to follow in the Chapel. Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend! Please contact Toni Burrows at 608-343-

3029 before 12 noon on Aug 20 if you will be attending so we know how much pizza to order

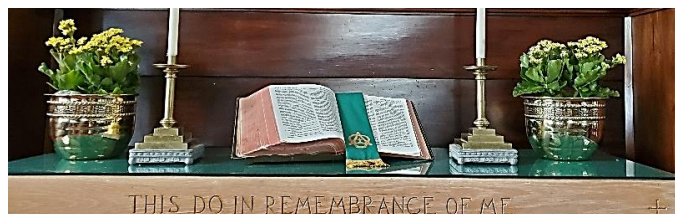


**August's movie is: "Indivisible"**

The extraordinary true story of Army Chaplain Darren Turner and his wife Heather. When war etches battle scars on their hearts, they face one more battle: the fight to save their marriage. One marriage, one family, under God. PG-13



## Altar Plants



United Women in Faith (UWIF) would like to thank all those who signed up for one or more plants on one or multiple dates for 2022. 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.

These dates are still open to honor, remember or celebrate: August 7 & 14, Sept. 11 & 18, Dec. 4 & 18. Call the church office if you would like one or more of these dates/spaces 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



# You're Welcome

**Summit Spirits** will be meeting Tuesday, August 2 at 6:30 p.m. in the library.

**Nurture Committee** will meet at Cyndi's house, Thursday, August 4 at 6 p.m.

**Wesleyan Circle** is meeting on Tuesday, August 9 at Julie's house 6 p.m.



## Nurture Update..

August...there is still some summer left to be out and about and enjoy the lovely warm weather! But whatever season we're in, God has given us TIME to "nurture" our congregation, neighbors and community friends.

Consider...visits, phone calls, encouraging notes, invitations to worship, bible studies, soup supper, coffee fellowship on Wednesday mornings for the ladies, breakfast gatherings for the men and ladies on Friday mornings, concerts, volunteering—the list goes on!

"Stay connected to God—stay connected with others."  
Looking ahead:

- **BASH-September 11** (ages 3-6<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Confirmation class (more information coming from Pastor Loretta)
- Coffee Fellowship-September 4 (need volunteers to come forward to serve and/or bake.

The next **Nurture Committee** meeting is Thursday, August 4 at 6 p.m. at Cyndi's.



## From the Parish Nurse...



Dear Church Family and Friends,

I am sure by now most of you have heard that I have agreed to assist the Sparta UCC church in filling the pulpit. I will be there for a couple Sundays in August.

Pastor Loretta and I were talking about Lay Speaking classes and I am praying that some of you may feel this is something you would like to consider. Please pray about it and if

you think it is something you are interested in and feel God leading you, please see myself and/or Pastor.

**Certified Lay Speaker** The United Methodist Church has a long history of laity preaching and sharing God's Word from the pulpit. There is a certified lay speaker program that exists to train, equip, and support laity who are responding to God's call through the specialized ministry of preaching.

**What is a Lay Servant?** A United Methodist Lay Servant is an active member of a local church or charge who is ready and desirous to serve the Church and who is well informed on and committed to the Scriptures and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of The United Methodist Church and who has received specific training to develop skills in witnessing to the Christian faith through spoken communications, church and community leadership, and care-giving ministries. Lay Servants serve by leading, caring and communicating.

**Leading** Lay Servants combine words and actions in leadership roles within their churches and communities.

**Caring** Lay Servants care for others. Some are involved in crisis ministries, such as visiting grieving families. Lay servants share a ministry of caring one-on-one with people in times of need and in times of joy, and show their faith by responding to others with care-giving love and service.

**Communicating** Lay Servants often fill pulpits, lead Bible studies, or speak in youth and children's groups, healthcare centers, retirement centers, prison ministries, and more. Lay Servant Ministry is a wonderful way to support your church using your talents. There are so many ways to be involved as a trained lay servant. I'm so glad I took advantage of the training all those years ago.

In Christ's Love,

Priscilla

## The Way to Spiritual Christianity

By David Watson

It's common today to hear people talk about the "secular West." "Secular," however, may not be the best term to describe our culture. We in the West tend to be religious people, though less frequently Christian than has been the case in the past. Apart from the major world religions, there are innumerable religious practices that we call "new age," or sometimes "occult." From tarot cards to crystals to various forms of "mindfulness," the religious practices of the West are increasingly both diverse and individualistic. They are customizable, like an iPhone. We can download what we want, when we want, in ways that suit our preferences.

The God of all creation, however, is not a product to be consumed, but a Lord to be worshiped. As a friend of mine likes to say, God has many enemies, but no rivals. The mandate of the church has always been to draw people into the worship of the true and living God who came to us in Jesus Christ and abides with us in the Holy Spirit. Thus, we need to be discerning in our religious practices, and we need to teach others to do the same. First John 4:1 teaches us not to believe every spirit. Rather, we are to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (NRSV). Do these spirits confess the incarnate God who came to us in the person of Jesus Christ? If they do not, they are not from God.

In some ways, the world of the postmodern West is like the world of the early gentile Christians. Luke recounts for us that the Athenians whom Paul visited "would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new" (Acts 17:21). Paul recognizes that these people are "extremely religious... in every way." They seek enlightenment and have perceived truth in limited ways. Yet the fullness of God's revelation is in and through Jesus Christ—crucified, risen, and ascended. Christ is no longer here in body, but we can know him through the work of the Holy Spirit.

There are many spirits, but there is only one Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit who is sent by Christ (John 20:22). The Holy Spirit empowers the church for the work of evangelism (Acts 1:8). He cultivates within us a love of God and neighbor—even perfect love. He gives us gifts as he chooses for the building up of the church (Rom 12:6-8, 1 Cor. 12:4-11). He is our Advocate (John 14:15) and teacher (John 14:26). He is the Spirit of truth (John 14:17).

As Christians, we confess belief in the Holy Spirit, but do we trust him? What do we expect of him? If we

did not believe in God, would our expectations for our lives be different? If so, how? God is not just an idea. In important ways, God is like a person, with will and agency. God believes certain things, wants certain things, and does certain things. The question for us as humans is whether our beliefs, desires, and actions are in agreement with His. Are we willing to allow this God to reshape our hearts, transform the way we live, and move with power among our communities of faith? This is spiritual Christianity: to give our whole lives to God and yield to the power and work of the Holy Spirit—and to no other.

### A Suggested Pattern of Prayer

As you pray through the following prayer points, invite the presence of the Lord into your time of prayer. Each day's prompt has a Scripture reference for you to pray through. As you pray allow time to also listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to you. When you have prayed through the Scripture and prayer point, you may be led to add your own prayers. Pray and consider what action steps might you take in response to the Lord's leading. Repeat this prayer pattern weekly for the month.

**Sunday:** Pray that God will give you discernment about what is from him and what is not. Pray for divine wisdom and divine leading. (1 Cor. 2:12)

**Monday:** Ask God to show you where you have allowed idols in your life. Pray for forgiveness and ask that God will purify your heart. (1 Tim 1:5)

**Tuesday:** Praise and honor God through your prayer. Recommit your life to him and to the ministry of the good news of Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:29-30)

**Wednesday:** Give praise and thanksgiving for the presence, power, and work of the Holy Spirit. Ask to be filled anew with the Spirit and to be transformed by his grace. (2 Cor. 3:17-18)

**Thursday:** Pray that your life will be yielded entirely to the work of the Holy Spirit that you will be made perfect in love in this life. (Rom. 8:5-6)

**Friday:** Ask God to activate the gifts of the Spirit in your life from Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. (1 Cor. 12:7)

**Saturday:** Ask God to move with power in your church. Pray that God's work in your community of faith will exceed all expectations. (Eph. 3:20-21)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

*The Rev. Dr. David Watson serves as Academic Dean and Professor of New Testament at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.*



## August Anniversaries

- 01 Tom & Ellen Hemstock
- 03 Brenda & Scott Herrman
- 07 Jackie & James Davis
- 15 Kurt & Amy Kiefer
- 16 Sara & Chris Angle
- 17 Shirley & Marvin Fokema
- 26 Dean & Ann Olson
- 27 Pete & Deb Foss
- 28 Dani & Matt Glut

## August Birthdays

- 01 Lynn Humphrey
- 01 McKenzie McDonald
- 02 Alexis Moore
- 04 Beverly Gamble
- 04 Eloda Miller
- 05 Mia Button
- 06 Sara Blackdeer
- 08 Cody Flury
- 08 Kenneth Snow
- 09 Jeanine Houtevelde
- 11 Jerry Hesselberg
- 11 Ruth Jerome
- 12 Charlene Nowak
- 14 Aubrianah McCarter
- 14 Ashley Weibel
- 15 Areanna Lakowske
- 17 Pat Eggers
- 17 Cindy Isensee
- 18 Gabrielle Kozelka
- 21 Dana Kemp
- 23 Karen Joos
- 24 Ron Ebert Jr.
- 25 Mike Donahue
- 27 Dan Davis
- 27 Kiyah Peth-Schaffer
- 27 Cody White



## August Schedules

### Bakery pick-up

- 7 Margie Lakowske
- 14 Amy & Kurt
- 21 Dave & Sara
- 28 Priscilla & Jeff

### Tech Team

- 7 Toni & Cheryl
- 14 Cheryl & Cindy
- 21 Toni & Amy
- 28 Ron & Kristine

### Liturgist

- 7 Amy Kiefer
- 14 Toni Burrows
- 21 Paul Foulke
- 28 Priscilla Hemmersbach

### Ushers

- 7 Bob & Cathy Nichols
- 14 Kurt & Amy Kiefer
- 21 Peggy Wright & Donna Burnham
- 28 John & Karen Lodico



# The Chimes

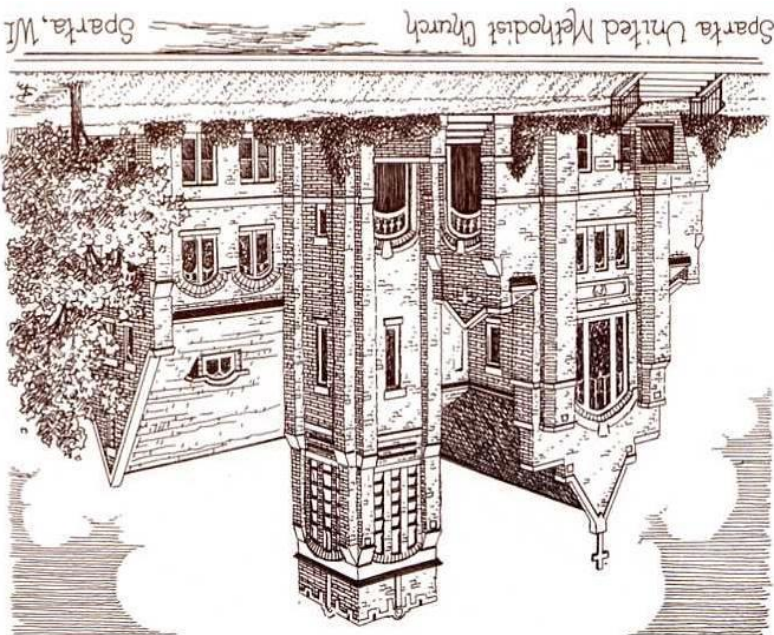
Sparta United Methodist Church

210 N Court Street  
Sparta, WI 54656

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**Prepared Especially For:**



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

**Phone:** (608)269-6949

**Fax:** (608)269-6940

**Email:** [office@spartamethodist.com](mailto:office@spartamethodist.com)

**Website:** [lewaughtal.wixsite.com/spartaumc](http://lewaughtal.wixsite.com/spartaumc)

## **SUMC Worship Schedule**

### **In-house Service**

9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings

### **Online Service**

YouTube: Sparta UMC month day year