

The Chimes

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



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Prepared Especially For:

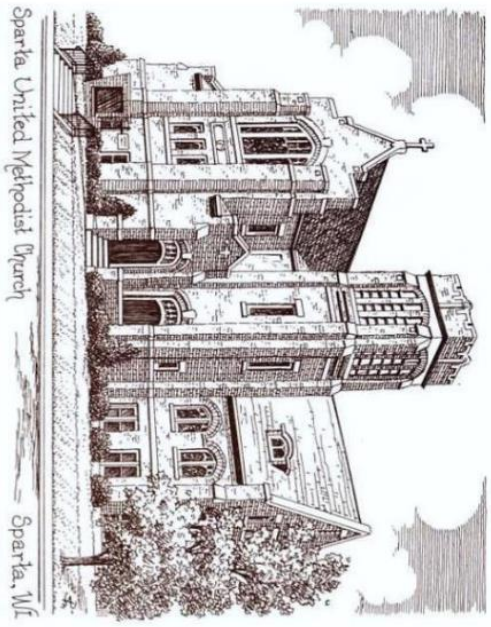
Pastor: Reverend Lourdes Magalhães

Cell: (973) 856-4072

Email: office@spartamethodist.com
Website: www.spartaumc.net
Office: (608) 269-6949
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9am Online livestream @ Youtube & Facebook
Spartaumc - month - day - year

SUMC WORSHIP SCHEDULES
SUNDAYS 9am In Peron



Sparta United Methodist Church
Sparta, WI

Sparta United Methodist Church

210 North Court St. Sparta, WI 54656
(608) 269-6949 | office@spartamethodist.com | www.spartaumc.net
Reverend Lourdes Magalhães - Pastor

February, 2026

Chimes Newsletter



Dear Beloved Members and Friends of Sparta United Methodist Church,

February arrives quietly, often wrapped in winter’s stillness, yet it carries a deep invitation from God: *to pause, to breathe, and to trust again*. In a world that feels heavy and uncertain, God meets us not with hurry, but with grace.

The Scripture reminds us: *“The Lord’s faithful love never ends; his mercy never fails. They are renewed every morning; great is your faithfulness.”* — **Lamentations 3:22–23**
This is our hope. Even when days feel long and hearts feel tired, God is still renewing mercy—daily, faithfully, lovingly. Grace is not something we must earn; it is something we are invited to receive.

As we move toward Lent, the church offers sacred spaces to slow down and reconnect with God and with one another.
Whether you come with joy or grief, strength or questions, you are welcome. Lent is not about perfection—it is about returning.
Returning to God’s love.
Returning to prayer.
Returning to the grace that holds us together see our lent program schedule

- **Ash Wednesday Services** February 18 will mark the beginning of our Lenten journey—a time of humility, honesty, and hope.
- **Lent Prayer Vigils** at Sparta UMC will be held **every Tuesday from 6:00–6:45 pm in the chapel**, offering a quiet, gentle space for prayer, reflection, and healing.
- **Ecumenical Lent Devotions & Luncheon at 12pm; 2026 Schedule**
 - o **February 25**, 12pm United Methodist Church - Fellowship Hall -
Pastor Lourdes devotional
Chaplain McCall shares devotionally oriented description of his work at Ft. McCoy
 - o **March 4. St. Patrick’s.**
Pastor Eric devotional
1pm Ministerial Meeting.

- **March 11. Congregational Church.**
Pastor Priscilla Devotional
Family Promise
- **March 18. Faith EF Church** Pastor Brian Devotional Stacia Johnston-
Lyga shares devotionally oriented description of

SafeFamiliesforChildren
- **March 25. Trinity Lutheran Church**
Pastor Josh Devotional
- **April 3 - Good Friday** - 9AM Gather for Stations of the Cross walking around the city
10:00AMto11AMGoodFridayEcumenicalServiceatLanham&SchanhoferFuneralHome

Maythis February remind us that even in winter, God is at work beneath the surface—
preparing new life, restoring weary souls, and shaping us into people of compassion and hope.

With gratitude for each of you and hope for our shared journey,

Grace and peace,

Rev. Lourdes Magalhães - Sparta United Methodist Church
photoscreditLourdesMagalhaes



Sparta United Methodist Church - February Calendar, 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
1 9 am Worship Serv. H. C Scrip Cards deadline	2 9am Free Bread "K" St. E 3 pm TOP'S Gard r 5:30 pm Yoga f h	3 5 pm Soup Supper f h 6pm SLB Conf Rm 7 pm Al-Anon Gard r	4 5pm Confirmation C 7pm Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm Zoom pr's Mting Bishop D. S	5 2pm Bible St c r 6pm Nurture	6 8am Men's & Women's Breakfast 9am TOP'S	7
8 9 am Worship Serv.	9 9am Free Bread "K" St. E 9am - 1pm Pr @ Bishop's Day at 1st UMC, Wausau 3 pm TOP'S Gard r 5:30 pm Yoga f h	10 1pm Lois C S. Kitc 5 pm Soup Supper f h 6:30m Wesleyan C Chapel 7 pm Al-Anon Gard r	11 1pm Records & Hist 5pm Confirmation C 7pm Choir Rehearsal	12 10:30 am Holy Commun @ MH 2pm Bible St c r	13 8am Men's & Women's Breakfast 9am TOP'S	14
15 9 am Worship Service after the serv Friendship & Love Shrove Pan-cake Breakfast	16 9am Free Bread "K" St. E. 3 pm TOP'S Gard r 5:30 pm Yoga f h	17 5 pm Soup Supper f h 6pm Lent Serv Chapel 7 pm Al-Anon Gard r	18 12pm & 6pm Ash Wed Serv. with Ashes imposition 5pm Confirmation C 7pm Choir Rehears	19 2pm Bible St c r	20 8am Men's & Women's Breakfast 9am TOP'S	21
22 9 am Lent Worship Service with Praise Band	23 9am Free Bread "K" St. E. 3 pm TOP'S Gard r 5:30 pm Yoga f h	24 5 pm Soup Supper f h 6pm Lent Serv Chapel 7 pm Al-Anon Gard r 6:30pm Insurance z. mt.	25 12pm Ecumene. Prayer & Luncheon 5pm Confirmation C 7pm Choir Rehear.	26 2pm Bible St c r	27 8am Men's & Women's Breakfast 9am TOP'S	28

Welcome to

Bridgepath

Advanced Assisted Living & Memory Care

Discover comfort and care - contact us today to tour our newly renovated community. Additional apartments and renovated spaces designed with comfort, safety, and dignity in mind.

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Morrow Home Community

"A Christian Tradition Of Caring"



Servant Leadership Board Report



We welcome in 2026 new members, Kristine Phillips and Marty Walley to the Servant Leadership Board! Vacancies are still open for Trustees committee

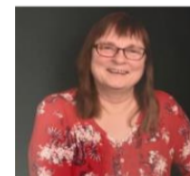
members and Chair as well as SLB Chair. All positions would have the benefit of a mentor to work with them. Please let Pastor or myself know if you are interested in serving. January is the perfect time of the year to reevaluate. Pastor handed out a survey and asked that all current and past SLB members fill it out so we can assess how the Accountable Leadership Board (ALB) model is working for us. Pastor and I attended an ALB Training event in Mt Horeb

on January 10. We took away some valuable tips that we will share with the board at the next meeting.

On January 11, after worship service, SLB held a Town Hall meeting. We had originally called it a Visioning Session but decided to wait until the SLB Survey results were compiled.

As of this writing, the New Sound System has had improvement. We wait the conclusion of its installation as the main part has not arrived yet to be installed soon. Stay warm and healthy!

Blessings, Toni Jensen 😊



SERVANT LEADERSHIP BOARD, Summary of the 1/6/26 Meeting

The monthly meeting of the Servant Leadership Board

was held on January 6, 2026. Pastor Lourdes led the group in opening prayer and devotions, asking us to reflect on "How powerful God's words are in our lives." Minutes from the previous meeting were unanimously approved. Pastor presented a vision of her plans for the 2026 liturgy, beginning with her current sermon series based on Bridges of Hope and Grace. She presented members of the group with a survey which asked us to compare our perspectives on similarities and differences between our former Administrative Council and our current Servant Leadership Board. Members were asked to complete the survey, which Pastor then compiled and shared at a meeting she and Toni Jensen attended in Mt Horeb, WI on January 10.

Additional topics discussed included the Finance report by Paul Foulke; SPRC update on hiring of administrative assistant by Marty Walley; and the Trustees report by Scott Naeseth discussing who has or should have access to the church keys, and door/lock repairs by Kurt Kiefer.

Old Business:

The sound system installation is about complete. Final adjustments will be made within the next few weeks.

Discussion of the Safe Sanctuary Policy was tabled for further discussion.

Recruiting members to serve on various committees was discussed, with emphasis on finding a new generation of people to serve. Prayerfully consider what God may be calling you to do.

Coffee Fellowship Schedule for was shared. The new schedule features teams of

4, which will be asked to serve about 4 times per year.

New Business:

The needs of aging congregation members were discussed. Pastor Lourdes has asked us to think of how we, as a congregation, can assist church members and others in the community as they age (for example, transportation to

appointments, home visits, etc.). Also mentioned was the possibility of applying for a grant from the conference.
Next Meeting: Tuesday, Feb 3, 2026 at 6:00 PM in the church conference room. All are welcome to attend.

Judy E. Fuhrmann - Secretary of the January meeting

LISTENING, LEARNING, AND LEANING FORWARD TOGETHER

A Reflection on Our Leadership Survey and Our Shared Calling

Over the past weeks, members of the SLB were invited to participate in a **Leadership Evaluation Survey**, reflecting on the past five years of our Servant Leadership Board (SLB). This survey was not simply about structures or processes—it was about relationships, trust, faithfulness, and hope. It was an opportunity to listen deeply to one another as we discern how God is shaping Sparta United Methodist Church for today and for the future.

Of the **12 surveys distributed, 7 were returned**, representing a **58.33% response rate**. While this is just over half, the responses were thoughtful, prayerful, and deeply meaningful. Each response carried a clear message: *this congregation cares about its church, its leadership, and its witness in the world.*

What We Heard: Gratitude and Trust

One of the strongest and most consistent themes across the survey responses was **gratitude for communication**. Every respondent named communication as a strength of the current leadership model. Many also affirmed accountability, spiritual discernment, and responsiveness to change. Importantly, no respondent expressed a negative overall experience with the Servant Leadership Board.

This tells us something vital: **trust is present**. Trust does not mean perfection; it means people believe leadership is acting in good faith, listening, and seeking God’s guidance. In a time when institutions everywhere struggle with trust, this is something to give thanks for.

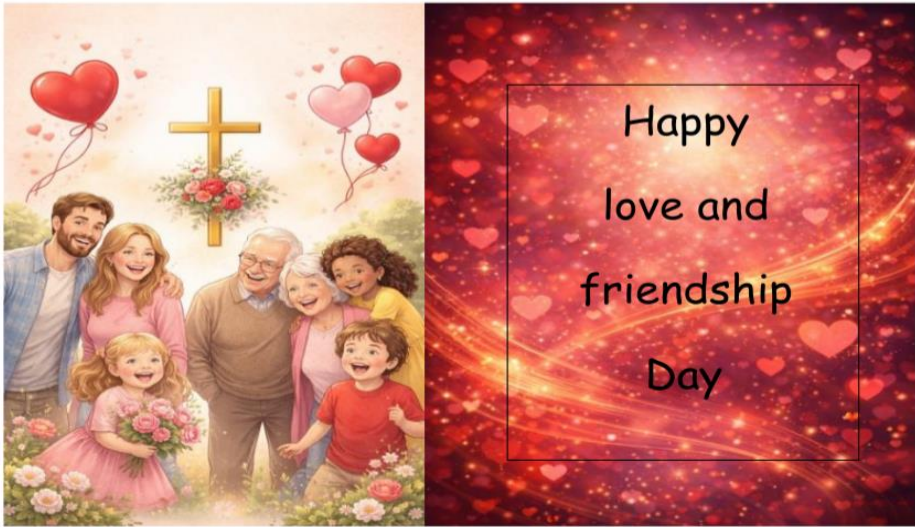
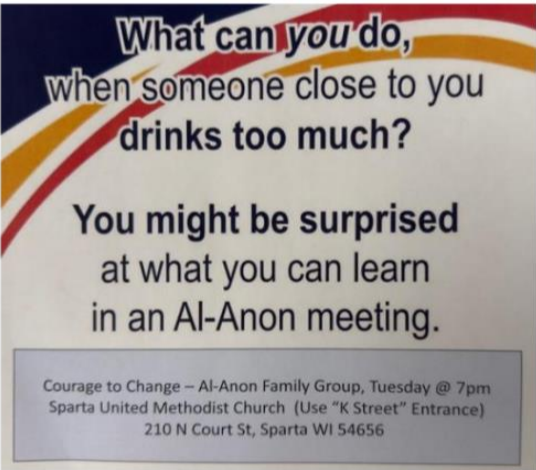
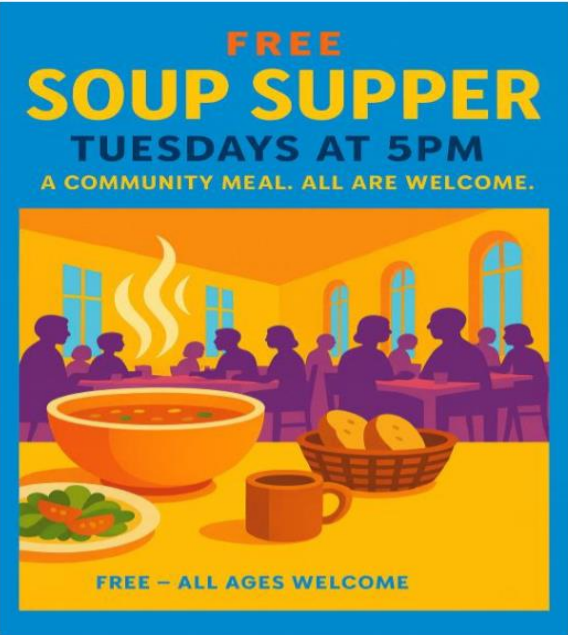
Respondents also named feeling emotionally safe, informed, and spiritually supported. These are not small matters. They are signs of a church that is doing more than surviving—it is **caring for souls**.

Where We Are Being Invited to Grow

Alongside encouragement, the survey also named areas for growth. Several respondents expressed a desire for:



Weight Support group
helping each other
to keep it down
**Mondays 3pm &
Fridays 9am at Sparta
United Methodist Church
"K" Street entrance**





FRIENDSHIP, LOVE & PANCAKES

The Men of Sparta
United Methodist Church
and Nurture Committee
invite YOU to
FEBRUARY 15, 2026
at the Fellowship Hall
after the Sunday Service

Join us for this delicious
moment

ANNIVERSARIES



9th Wayne &
Amy Johnson
17th Russell &
Melissa Culpitt
25th John &
Diane Noonan



BIRTHDAYS

2nd Tom Houtvelde
3rd Peggy Wright
6th Angela Talsky
8th Toni Jensen
10th Emily Ascher
10th Dean Olson
11th Laurie Graber
11th Sara Kemp
12th Klynn Friemoth
14th Linda Pfuhl
15th Lorie Dale
22nd Melissa Goodenough
22nd Sarah Rodriguez
22nd Russ Tock
25th Mara Culpitt
25th Brian Hemstock
25th Jane Hobson

- Greater clarity about **how decisions are made**
- More opportunities to feel **heard and represented**
- Stronger connections between leadership and committees or ministries

These reflections were not framed as complaints, but as **hopes**—hopes for deeper participation and shared ownership. In fact, one insight stood out clearly: **the closer people are to leadership, the more connected they feel**. This invites us to think creatively about how we can widen the circle of participation without overwhelming anyone.

Many respondents also named **time, health, and energy** as limiting factors in their engagement. This is a reality in a small-town, aging congregation, and it reminds us that faithfulness is not measured by how much we do, but by how we offer ourselves to God **within our capacity**.

A Church Rooted in Place and History

Sparta United Methodist Church does not exist in isolation. We are deeply rooted in the life of this town, the surrounding counties, and the state of Wisconsin. For generations, Methodists have helped shape education, health care, social services, agriculture, and civic life across this region. Our church has walked alongside families through births and deaths, celebrations and crises, economic growth and uncertainty.

We live in a small town with **limited numerical growth potential**, yet our **spiritual and communal impact remains significant**. The survey responses reflect an awareness of this reality. There is concern about membership and sustainability, yes—but there is also hope, creativity, and a desire to continue building bridges between generations.

Christ's Model for Today's World

As we reflect on these findings, we are reminded that leadership in the church is not about efficiency alone. It is about **following Jesus**.

Jesus' model was **holistic**—caring for body, mind, and spirit.

It was **healing**—restoring dignity to the wounded and the forgotten.

It was **relational**—building community across boundaries of age, status, and background.

It was **missional**—always pointing outward toward love of neighbor.

The survey concluded with one clear request from respondents: **encouragement**. This is a holy invitation. Encouragement is not cheerleading; it is reminding one another who we are in Christ and what God is still doing among us.

An Invitation to All

As we move forward together, may this survey not be the end of a conversation, but the beginning of a deeper one. Each of us—whether young or old, active or limited by health, serving on a committee or quietly praying from home—has a place in God's unfolding story here.

We are invited:

- To grow as **better Christians**, centered in Christ

- To live our faith **holistically**, integrating worship, service, and daily life
- To become a **healing presence** in a fractured world
- To build **common ground** for the future of our church and community

The future of Sparta United Methodist Church will not be built by a board alone. It will be shaped by **shared prayer, mutual encouragement, courageous listening, and Christ-like love**. May we continue to walk together—faithfully, humbly, and hope-filled—trusting that the God who has carried us this far is still leading us forward.

“Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who has promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23)

Reverend Lourdes Magalhães



FINANCE COMMITTEE

We would like to thank all who have filled out and turned in their pledge card. If you haven't yet, you can still fill it out and return.

These pledge cards help us to plan our yearly budget along with helping to continue with our church ministry. If you turn in your pledge card and your finances change, you can always change your pledge accordingly letting the pastor or our finance secretary know. As of January 19, 2026, our general budget was at \$30,265.75. We have not had a Finance Committee meeting yet this year so if you have any questions or concerns for us, please contact us. Also, if you'd like to be a part of this Committee, please contact us.

Julie Hanson and Paul Foulke, co-chairs of Finance Committee



Find us on Facebook

www.spartaumc.net

share in your Facebook our events

and what you learned in the church through the service and ministries.

This is one way you can testify God's glory and blessings to the world.

Being Christ like to the world; starts with you and me, and it starts here!!



Another way to keep connected with us is Follow us on YouTube for viewing of Sunday Service

Visit our website at:
<https://www.spartaumc.net>

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 Holiday Cards!

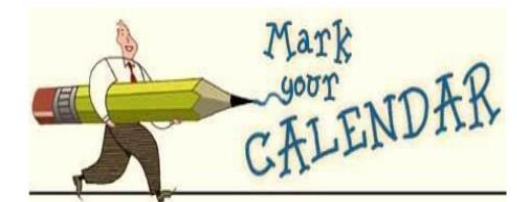
The cost is only 50¢ each. All proceeds go to our Missions & Outreach Fund.

You can find them in the Gathering Place!



Yoga with Rachel Frazee

Mondays 5:30-6:45pm
Come and check it out
where? At Sparta UMC Fellowship Hall entrance on "K" St.



LEADING THE WORSHIP SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

February 1th:

Ushers: Kurt & Amy Kiefer

Tech Team: Annabelle & Emily Von Ruden

Liturgist Leader: Marty Walley

Coffee Fellowship: Danette & Rich Zidich, Lynn Humphrey, Cyndi Wise.

Song Leader: Choir

February 8th:

Ushers: The Eberts

Tech Team: Josh Ebert & Amy Kiefer

Liturgist Leader: Beth Nowak

Coffee Fellowship: Barb McGreevy, Cathy & Bob Nichols, Cheryl Isensee

Song Leader:

February 15th:

Ushers: Rich & Danette Zidich, Peggy Wright

Tech Team: Ron & Kristine Phillips

Liturgist Leader: Beth Nowak

Coffee Fellowship: Nurture - Love & Friendship Shrove Pancakes

Song Leader: Choir

February 22nd:

Ushers: Kurt & Amy Kiefer

Tech Team: Annabelle Von Ruden & Cheryl Isensee

Liturgist Leader: Judy E. Fuhrmann

Coffee Fellowship: Laurie Bartholomew, Scott Naeseth & Rose White, Julie R. Adams

Song Leader: Praise Band

Want to participate in any team, contact the office (608) 269-6949

TRUSTEE REPORT

January has provided some ups and downs weather which has caused some problems with our heating system. Hopefully those items have been resolved. I will remain as Board Chair for 2026; however, this will be my last year as the Chair. We are looking for young members who are interested in the church and in the future of it to please step forward. The current board is comprised of members who are all 65 or older. We need some fresh ideas for the church's future. Please consider this as an opportunity to help shape the future.
Thanks, Scott Naeseth - Chairman



What is the Local Church Trustee Committee at Sparta United Methodist Church responsible for:
It is a Ministry of Stewardship, Care, and Sacred Responsibility for a group of men and women.

Our Trustee Committee serves a vital **ministry of stewardship**—caring for the buildings, grounds, and physical assets that God has entrusted to this congregation so that *worship, mission, hospitality, and healing can flourish*.

From a theological perspective, trusteeship is rooted in the biblical understanding that **“the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it” (Psalm 24:1)**. Trustees do not simply manage property; they **care for sacred space**—spaces where faith is nurtured, prayers are lifted, relationships

are restored, and the community encounters God’s grace. In the Wesleyan tradition, this ministry reflects **faithful stewardship, accountability, and love of neighbor**, ensuring that church facilities are safe, accessible, welcoming, and used for God’s purposes.

At Sparta UMC, trustees typically:

- Oversee the **church buildings, grounds, and related property**
 - Ensure proper **maintenance, repairs, safety, and accessibility**
 - Manage **insurance, legal documents, and property records**
 - Coordinate with contractors, volunteers, and church leadership
 - Support long-term planning so the church’s physical space serves present and future ministry
- All work is done in harmony with the mission and discipline of the United Methodist Church.

Time Commitment

- On average, trustees serve about **3–6 hours per month**
- This includes meetings, inspections, coordination, and follow-up
- During major projects, repairs, or unexpected needs, time may temporarily increase

Trusteeship at Sparta UMC is a **quiet but powerful form of discipleship**—a way of loving God and neighbor by caring for the places where God’s people gather, grow, and serve. Please contact us if God is calling to serve in this committee.

Thanks for all your prayers and help hand always present when needed.

UNITED WOMAN IN FAITH



Our new mission statement and logo—United Woman in Faith seeks to connect and nurture woman through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative

fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities. We equip and educate woman and girls around the world to be leaders by providing educational experiences. We serve and advocate for justice to change unfair policies.

Members of SUMC/UWIF are to be thanked for past and upcoming service to our local community and church which includes picking up monthly altar plants. Generous people from near and far purchased the altar plants. A big thank you to all. Service to our community and beyond includes gifts of support at Christmas time and we have received thank you cards or letters from Children’s Vision International, Head Start, Brighter Tomorrows, SASD Backpack Program, Ecumenical Food Pantry and St. Clare Mission. They are our neighbors and have the same goals of service to our community.

A February event for UWIF is Call to Prayer and Self Denial. This year’s theme is The Future Is Now: Invest in Our Children. Very timely. A short program will be presented to the Lois and Wesleyan Circles on Tuesday,

February 10th. Lois meets at 1 p.m. in the little kitchen and Wesleyan meets at 6:30 p.m. in Chapal. With arms we welcome all women to experience this fellowship.

An early thank you to Barb, Linda, Margie, Marty and Maxine. Each will provide homemade cookies for the Red Cross blood drive at Barney Center on Tuesday, February 3rd.

A March event for the two Circles is providing snacks for approximately 18 volunteers at St. Clare Mission. Lois Circle will do Tuesday, March 3rd and Wesleyan will take Tuesday, March 17th.

Lastly, a Zoom Event for Social Action Day is scheduled for Saturday, April 11th from 9 a.m. to noon. More information will be posted on the UWIF bulletin board in the little kitchen. Could our church host a watch party for local churches? Stay warm knowing you are blessed.

Cathy Nichols, UWIF Programs and Communications





Join the Women's Breakfast & Men's breakfast Fridays
at 8 am at Family Rest.
both groups meet separately for a time of fellowship and grace
join us



Nurture Committee

"Love one another...❤️

Thank you! 72 luminaires "glowed" on Christmas Eve in honor of and in memory of our loved ones. \$310 was given to the Food Pantry.

All Church Birthday Banquet brought us 45 friends together to celebrate each other with beautifully decorated table and 12 delicious cakes! Cakes and tables by: Rose White, Pastor Lourdes Magalhães, Winnie Earl, Danette Zidich, Barb McGreevy, Aubrey Ebert, Kandi Ebert, Cathy Nichols, Annabelle VonRuden, Marty Walley and Eileen Gajewsky. \$40.72 Was collected through birthday pennies and will be given to Mission. Thank you to everyone your participation raises hope to many.

Coming up:

Sunday, February 15th – Friendship, Love and Pancake will be in the Fellowship Hall following the worship service. The men of our church will prepare and serve pancakes for our traditional Shrove Pancake Breakfast before Lent begins. Some Valentine activities will be offered for the children. All are welcome. Do you have some spare time to help the preparation, please contact Cyndi Wise or any member of the nurture committee.

Wednesday, February 18th – Ash
Wednesday Service will be in Chapel with imposition of Ashes at 12pm and 6pm

Lent devotional will be available to all families.

Tuesday, February 24th 6pm there will be Lenten devotional Service in the Chapel everyone is welcome to attend after the Soup & Supper.

Wednesday, February 25th First Ministerial Association Ecumenical Service & Luncheon is here at noon. *Pastor Lourdes* will lead this devotion and *Chaplain McCall* will share about his chaplaincy at Fort McCoy .

Sunday, March 8th "International Woman's Day" A brunch will follow the worship service.

- We love welcoming new ideas and hands to help making our ministry a great engagement to all want to help - contact us.

Cyndi Wise

Thank you to all who have
donated to Soles4Souls
We have sent
150 shoes so far in 2026



RECORDS AND HISTORY

If you have not either had your picture taken or submitted a picture of yourself and or your family for the Church Directory,

please do so by February 11, 2026. We are in the final stages of compiling our information. If you need us to come to you or if you'd like to meet at church, please call me and we will make arrangements. If you have a digital picture to submit, you can email it to Barb McGreevy at bar64ha@gmail.com.

There is also a short form we need you to complete to update your contact information. If you have questions please contact Margie Lakowske, 608-272-3331 (Landline) or 608-633-3588 (Cell)



THANK YOU: Erin Tadisich and all of the children and adults that presented our Christmas Program this year. It was wonderful. Take a bow for your efforts!

THANK YOU: Kurt Kiefer for fixing the locks on the entrance doors at church. Your handiwork is greatly appreciated!

THANK YOU: Cathy Nichols for styling the new Winter Alter flowers. They are just perfect!

THANK YOU: Toni Jensen, for the time and thought you put into establishing the new Coffee Fellowship Schedule. It was a huge undertaking and you seemed to have thought of every obstacle in creating the new teams! We appreciate your thoughtfulness.

THANK YOU TO the Christmas carolers' who surprised us with their beautiful singing and visit. **Dean & Ann Olson**

THANK YOU ALL for the warm wishes and blessings for our 50th anniversary. Jim & I are extremely blessed and grateful for the gift of alter flowers.

In Christ Love, Tim & Judy Fuhrmann

THANK YOU: Ruthie, Kurt & Amy Kiefer for purchasing the cordless vacuum for the sanctuary & gathering place cleaning. It is so nice and lightweight and does a great job!

SPRC - STAFF AND PASTOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

As we begin 2026, **WE WELCOME** Linda Vian as our new administrative assistant. She is bright and organized so please work with her as she navigates through all the things that make us Sparta Methodist Church.

A THANK YOU GOES OUT TO Beth Jerman who resigned her position to pursue more fulltime work. We wish her well.

Marty Walley SPRC Chairperson