

“The CHIMES” – June

Volume 56, No. 6

2021

Continuing the Conversation...

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:14-15)

“... lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:1-6)

“And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God...If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus...” (Philippians 1:9-11; 2:1-5)

I have had some interesting conversations lately, many of them around the decision to continue requiring masks in worship. The people I have talked with and I have not always left the conversation agreeing on the right thing to do, but I want you to know that I do appreciate these conversations. I hope people feel heard and I hope



they take into consideration my reasons for doing and saying what I believe is right for this church.

One thing that has become clear to me in some of these conversations is that I need to remind, or maybe educate, people about **what we believe as Methodists** that makes us distinctive from other denominations. Most Christian denominations have traditional core beliefs that we agree on; I point to the Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed as a couple of places we share common beliefs about God and the church. (If you are not familiar with either of those creeds please let me know and I will be happy to share them with you.)

Where we start to show some of our distinctive differences is around **God’s plan for people**. Some would say, “What is the point of masks, even if they could protect us, when it is our time to die we will die anyway.” That sort of idea comes from the theology of John Calvin, whose idea of God’s predestination meant that God has numbered each of our days for good or evil and that is that. He also believed that just as God has numbered our days, God has also predetermined that some are born for glory and some are born to eternal damnation. (My summarization; Calvin was very complex.)

John Wesley, father of Methodism, had a problem with Calvin’s ideas around predestination, as do I. Wesley agreed that God has a plan for us and God knows the number of our days and whether we will choose to follow God and God’s plan or not. Wesley also believed that God’s grace is always at work in our lives, wooing us into a relationship, even before we have any knowledge of God. God created us, God loves us, God has a plan, “*for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*” I believe Jesus confirmed this idea when he said, “*I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly*” (John 10:10). The “they” he refers to is believers—us.

Even though God has a plan for us, God loves us enough to give us the liberty to choose. God wants us to make good choices, to accept God’s love, to seek God’s will for our lives, to follow God’s will; but, God does not force us to live God’s perfect plan that God created for our welfare.

For example, I know God loves me and I want to love God to my fullest and live the plan God has for me.

But, I continue doing things that I know aren't part of God's plan, especially when I am tired or stressed. I know some of the choices I make, around diet and exercise, could shorten my life or at least make it less enjoyable, but I foolishly continue making those bad choices anyway.

We are given choices in life; that is why the Apostle Paul also tells us in Scripture to "work out our salvation." If we were just androids living out a predetermined path, there would be nothing to work out. We wouldn't even have to worry about following God; because, according to Calvin, either we would be born to follow God and live with God in eternity or we would be born doomed to hell...no choice for us under Calvin's theology of predestination.

Our Methodist theology understands God's grace—God's love in action that we can't earn or deserve—working in our lives, helping us to make better choices as we mature in our faith and relationship with God. God's grace is there for everyone whether we choose to respond to it or not. Sometimes our choices require putting the welfare of others first, before our personal desires, as we, "*in humility regard others as better than ourselves.*"

I also want to briefly talk about **fear**, because I have been told more than once by folks who disagree with me that I am pandering to fear (I believe this partly comes out of the Calvinist idea of God's plan). I want to say loud and clear, I am not afraid when it comes to the issue of wearing or not wearing masks (at least not for myself). I do want to do my best to care for other people, many around me who have compromised health for one reason or another. Sure, wearing a mask is inconvenient, but a small price to care for another.

If I have any fear it is that I will stand before Jesus some day and he will find me lacking in my vocation as a pastor. That is when I find hope in Paul's words from Romans that reminds me that I "*did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but...received a spirit of adoption.*" God, my Father, Jesus, my Savior and Brother, the Holy Spirit, my Advocate are there to guide me, redeem and refresh me, and forgive me when I fail at following God's perfect plan for me.

Yes, I do my best to follow God, trusting in the work of Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but **I also pay attention to science** and listen to those who work together to provide us with the best practices for the greater good of the community. God created and gave us men and women with minds that are hard-wired for science; they are a gift from God.

You may say you trust in God not in science; but if you go to a doctor, or a chiropractor, or a dentist, or a dietician, or a trainer, or any number of specially educated and trained people, you are also relying on science. That is not a bad thing, science has given us many wonderful advancements over the centuries. Of course, as with anything, science can also be used for harm when it is practiced with wrong motives. I take all of this into consideration when faced with any difficult decision and I take it to prayer trusting in God's guidance.

This idea of faith working with reason is also a distinctive idea from our Wesleyan heritage. John Wesley believed that four factors enlighten the core of the Christian faith for believers. Building on his Anglican theological tradition of **Scripture, tradition,** and **reason,** he added **experience.** For Methodists, Scripture is the primary source and standard for Christian doctrine. Tradition is the witness of development and growth of the faith through the early church. Experience is the individual's understanding and living the faith in the light of his or her own life. Through reason, the individual Christian brings to bear on the Christian faith discerning and rational thought. These four elements taken together bring the individual Christian to a mature and fulfilling understanding of the Christian faith and the required response of worship and service.

As I put into practice a discernment process that uses Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience, some will disagree with my outcome; and I won't always get it right because I'm not perfect. But when I do stand before Jesus, I will be confident that I have always tried my best to make the right decisions with the information I have at hand. If I err, I hope it will always be on the side of caring too much for the weakest among us, "*not looking to my own interests, but to the interests of others.*"

If you have taken the time to read this, you may still strongly disagree with me, and I'll respect that. But I also hope that you have learned a bit about what makes us Methodists. (If I have caused you to have questions—wonderful! Let's talk.) I also hope that as Christ's church we will all strive to "*... lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*"

Serving and leading in Christ's love!

Pastor L





Thank you! A big thank you to Sara Kemp for once again providing such nice planters at the K Street Entrance. It is very welcoming and very much appreciated. Maybe Spring has sprung for good this time!

Thank you! To the outside gardeners/lawn mowers of the church. I'm not sure who you are but you sure are keeping the grounds looking sharp. Your talents have not gone unnoticed! Thank you!

Thank you! A big thanks to all who supported the special **Lenten offering** this year. We were able to send \$1,343.50 to St. Claire Health Mission and Family First of Monroe County in support of these important local ministries.

We wish to thank our church family for all the support on the loss of Curley. The calls, visits, cards, memorials, and prayers have meant the world to us. Right until the end, he talked about church. His involvement there had been a big part of his life. The Christmas carolers were always special to him. Each year, much to our surprise, he would sing along, not missing a word. Once again, thank you.

With gratitude,
Maxine and Byron Holz



“for I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me...” (Matthew 25:35)

To the members of Sparta United Methodist Church, Many thanks for your recent contribution to the Ecumenical Food Pantry. With the contributions we receive, we are able to continue to serve those in need in our community. We appreciate your continued support in this!

Blessings,
Ann Kvale, Board Member

Congratulations

Last month when we listed our graduating high school seniors we missed recognizing a **college graduate**. Congratulations to Mara Culpitt on graduating from UW-Platteville. Mara is the daughter of Russ and Melissa Culpitt and granddaughter of Dave and Sara Kemp.



Family Promise



I would like to say Thank you to Marta Volden, Margie Lakowske, Donna Burnham, Pricilla Hemmersbach, and Cyndi Wise for volunteering to help feed a family of six the week of May 16-22, 2021.

Family Promise was hosting a family of six, a mom and dad with four kids and needed volunteers to cover the week due to church needing to cancel. Please pray for this family as they have since left the program.

Thank you to Michele Thornton for help in sending out emails.

Thank you for your generosity,
Lynn Humphrey
Family Promise Coordinator



“...The glory of children are their fathers.”

(Proverbs 17:6)

“Thanks be to faithful fathers to whose footsteps we have trod, True models of the kingdom, mirrors of the loving God.”

Happy Father's Day!!



Lois Circle

Now that the majority of us have had our Covid vaccine, we are planning on meeting for lunch at Don's Super Restaurant on Tuesday, June 8, at 11:30 am. If you need a ride, please call Cindy Isensee at 608-487-5859. Looking forward to seeing everyone again.



Will you accept the challenge??

Sparta St. John's church and school is going to get a team together for the Sparta Stampede. We are calling it "Better Fest for Butter Fest." We are encouraging our congregation to be better stewards of their talents, by being active in our community while representing Faith. We are asking your Church to consider getting a team in the Sparta Stampede too. Jesus is the only way to true health and wellness. (John 14:6) I think this is an excellent opportunity for our churches to unite in shining the light of Jesus. We are emerging from a pandemic that closed our doors and crushed church attendance. Let us each rise up! Let us be active in our community. Sparta needs Jesus now more than ever! Let's let them know He is here!

Thanks for considering getting a team together. I know this is last minute. I was at a Sparta Stampede meeting and they are low on numbers and this is one of their significant fundraisers, so I was hoping as a church community we could show them our support while showing our community Jesus is alive and He lives here in Sparta!

Please call Kimberly Mathews if you have any questions about meeting the "Church team challenge."
608-487-4879 (Call or text)
<http://www.bgcofsparta.org/sparta-stampede>

"For Physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." (1 Timothy 4:8)

Our Deepest Sympathy to:

The family and friends of David Hendricks who passed away on May 12. David was a longtime member of the church.



Finance Committee Update

The main way we support the ministries of the broader United Methodist church is through apportionments. Together when each church pays their fair share of the conference budget we can accomplish what no single church could hope to do by itself.



When we combine our prayers, presence, gifts and service we make a tremendous difference in the lives of God's people.

Our Impact as 12.5 million United Methodists, in 136 countries and the United States is phenomenal. Together we witness to the love of Christ for a hurting world and transform lives and communities in his name.

In future issues I will provide information about specific ministries our gifts support.

I am pleased to report that Sparta UMC has paid apportionments in full. Congratulations for helping ministry happen. Thank you.

Paul Foulke
Finance Chair



There is Light Ahead...

Celebrate Light at the End of the Tunnel

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24)

Where and when do you stop and celebrate? How do you "rejoice and be glad" in the day the "Lord has made?"

Today I stop to rejoice in the rain that is coming down, that we very much need. I celebrate the sun from this weekend that brought so many smiles. I rejoice in all of our churches who have and are continuing to do ministry despite the difficulties of the times. I celebrate the faithfulness of our congregations to continue to give of their time, talents, and treasures.

How are you celebrating God's continued blessings in your lives? What is your response going to be? How are you going to give to others because God has given to you?

We are so blessed. So, we are called to be a blessing to others. Volunteer in ways you feel comfortable. Attend church, in whatever format you wish. Donate to your church, other nonprofits, and causes close to your heart. Pray. Always Pray.

Celebrate! Because "This is the day that the Lord has made."

Rev. Krystal Goodger, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

Visit the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation at www.wumf.org or [Facebook/wumf.org](https://www.facebook.com/wumf.org) or call 1-888-903-9863

A Christian Music Event!



OneFest outdoor Christian music festival at the Northern

Wisconsin State Fairgrounds will be taking place this July 23-25! This is a non-profit event held to provide uplifting entertainment, encourage all, especially youth, to faith in Jesus through contemporary music and Glorify God in the Chippewa Valley. There are over 14 bands lined up over the weekend including Danny Gokey and Rend Collective, plus kids' activities; youth dance parties, and ministry showcases. For more information you can go to www.one-fest.com or [facebook.com/onefestchippewavalley](https://www.facebook.com/onefestchippewavalley)

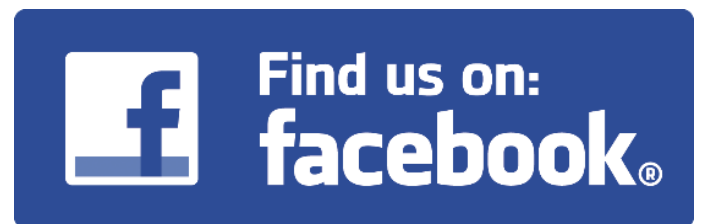


BASH Friends,

We have just dropped off the last of 13 BASH packets to our BASH Families. I hope you enjoyed learning about all that God and Jesus did for us and you continue to spend time with him each day. Thank you to Margie Lakowske and Pastor Loretta for dropping off packets and Michele Thornton for putting the packets together. Have a GREAT summer and see you in the fall.

Always remember Jesus Love You,
Lynn Humphrey
BASH Coordinator

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/. Once you are there just "like" the site and you will receive updates when new information is posted.



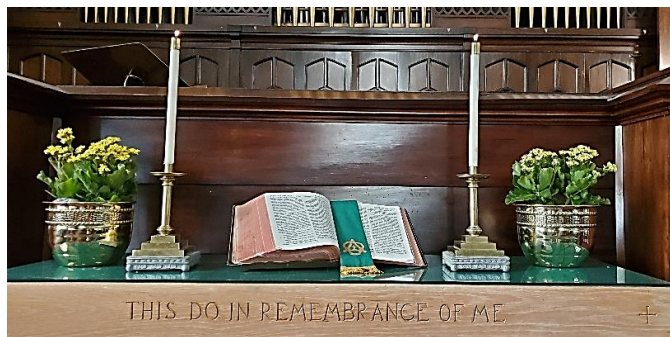
Thank you to all who have donated to Soles4Souls!

We have collected 814 pair of shoes through May!

CHANGING THE WORLD
ONE PAIR AT A TIME



Altar Plants



UMW would like to thank all those who signed up for one or more plants on one or multiple dates for 2021. Each date has two lines for one plant per line. Plants are \$4.75 each or two for \$9.50. Plant money goes to Eileen Gajewsky, UMW treasurer, who pays the invoice from Sparta Floral quarterly.

These dates are still open to honor, remember or celebrate: June 20 (2 spaces), August 1 (2 spaces), and October 3 (2 spaces). 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 UMW,
Cathy Nichols

SUMC Ministry Updates

As you hopefully know by now the **Free Bakery Table** has resumed. For the past month we have been receiving a nice variety of bakery items from Festival Foods for anyone interested in picking them up on Monday mornings (until all items are gone).

For those wondering when the **Tuesday Soup Suppers** may be starting back up, our organizer, Cyndi Wise, continues to meet monthly with the Health and Human Services Committee (which is comprised of the Health and Human Services Director, Public Health Nurse, and ADRC Director).

The committee continues to recommend not doing the in-person meal sites at this time. Cyndi is anticipating this could be the case into early fall (maybe September) unless a couple of things change. As of the last meeting, Monroe County was only at 28% of the population vaccinated and numbers of confirmed cases are slowly creeping up again because of the variant strains. Unfortunately, vaccines have been wasted because they aren't being used, some folks are not coming in for scheduled appointments, others just plainly aren't taking advantage of getting the vaccine for many different reasons.

Health and Human Services Committee is not panicking at this point or wanting us to panic, some things are looking up. They also continue to monitor the CDC recommendations as they prepare their recommendations. As much as we want to get the Soup Suppers going again, we prefer to stay cautious rather than causing COVID to spread in our eagerness to move forward.

Shop with scrip...support your church

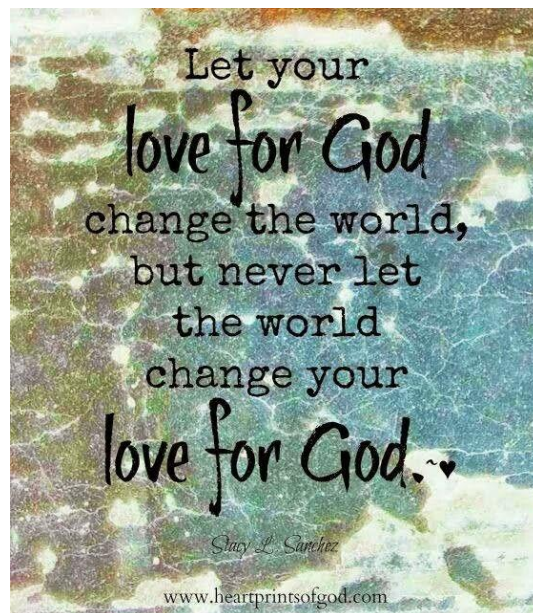


Thank you to everyone who continues to support the church through the shop with scrip program.

The next scrip order will be going in on **June 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.



Join us in a celebration of Life for Tom Hemstock Sr.

The family of Tom Hemstock Sr. invites you to join them for a celebration of life, Sunday, June 27, from 1 to 3 p.m. at Jake's Northwoods, 1132 Angelo Rd, Sparta, WI

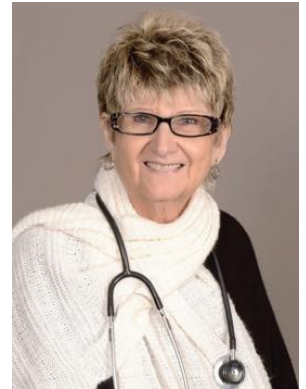
The only gift they ask for is the honor of your presence. Light refreshments will be served.

If you have questions Contact Ellen Hemstock at 608-633-0889 or wonder@centurytel.net Tom & Ellen Hemstock, Jr., Sherri & John LaCourse



From the Parish Nurse...

"...for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land." (Song of Solomon 2:11-12)



Renewal

We are in full swing of the spring season! The trees, plants and flowers are green and colorful. Nature has renewed itself once again. This season can bring to one's mind ideas of personal renewal, a time to start fresh and new.

As believers we have the great blessing of renewal in times of spiritual difficulty or weakness. When we first come to Christ the scriptures say that we put off the old man (person) and are renewed in the spirit of our mind (Ephesians 4: 22-24) but it doesn't stop there.

We'll still struggle with worldly desires and thoughts but have the continued opportunity to avoid conforming to this world but rather being transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2). Living the life of a Christian can be overwhelming at times, especially when combined with the physical and mental stresses of everyday life.

But our confidence can be found in the following verse. "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16). Just as the tree puts out new leaves, the birds build new nest and the grass grows green again, we have the great blessing of spiritual renewal!



Servant Leadership Board Update

At the May board meeting a robust discussion was held around worship and continued mask wearing in light of the new CDC guidelines. Several different views were heard and discussed and although the decision was not unanimous, it was decided to continue requiring masks in worship for the time being. Part of the reasoning behind the decision is that the CDC guidelines state that if you are vaccinated you can go without the mask around other vaccinated people. We are not going to ask people if they are vaccinated before they come into the sanctuary. Thus the continued requirement to wear masks at this time.

We are not only getting information from the CDC but also the Monroe County Health and Human Services Department. We hear from them on a monthly basis and they help make decisions based on our county percentage of vaccinated people and percentage of new cases. Their next meeting is June 1, so things could change after that.

In the meantime, it was decided that removing the tape barriers in the sanctuary to keep people six feet apart could come down. That way people can sit where they want and with who they want. This is a small step toward getting back to some sort of normal.

It all seems so very slow and we are all getting so tired of restrictions; but there are folks among us who have compromised immune systems and we want them to know that they are cared for. If you find yourself feeling anxious about how slowly things are changing, think back to where we were a year ago and the progress we have made since then. We are making progress!

We also talked about having a special “Welcome Back to Worship” service in the fall that will coincide with confirmation. Stay tuned for details of that service as we get closer to fall and the completion of confirmation classes.

Pastor has two students who have chosen to continue with confirmation classes throughout summer to make up time we lost this past year. Pastor and the confirmands are also planning to participate in a week-long mission event in Superior, WI from July 18-23 called Wildfire.

If you have any questions or comments for the leadership of this church you can contact Pastor or any of the Servant Leadership Board members. As a reminder the board members are: Toni Burrows, Paul Foulke, Julie Hanson, Priscilla Hemmersbach, Cheryl Isensee, Dave Kemp, John Lodico, Ron Phillips, and Peggy Wright. You can read the full minutes on the bulletin board in the hallway across from the library.



We recently took advantage of the nice weather to have confirmation class outside. Pictured is Haile Scheurich, daughter of Jacqui and Ben Simplot. Hailee is one of our awesome tech support team members who helps out on Sunday mornings. Not able to be in the picture is Aubrey Ebert.

Confirmation Class Ending Strong with Condensed Schedule

We have two confirmation students who have elected to take part in a condensed confirmation schedule and meet over the summer with Pastor Loretta. Both young ladies have been active in the church through worship and service. Aubrey has enjoyed working in the kitchen for Tuesday Soup Suppers and looks forward to the reboot of this ministry when it is deemed safe to do so. Hailee has been working with the worship tech team that records and livestreams our worship services. She is one of the people who runs the slide shows for worship.

Confirmation classes restarted in May with two weeks spent on the Ten Commandments. We will be spending three weeks learning about the Apostles' Creed and they will be asked to seriously consider what they believe and why it is important to them. We will finish out the summer studying Wesley's Three Simple Rules, prayer, United Methodist basics, and looking seriously at the vows they will take if they choose to complete the confirmation process and confirm their faith in a worship service on September 12. We will plan to spend the week of July 18-23 at a youth mission trip in Superior, WI called Wildfire.

Please keep these young ladies, their mentors, and Pastor in your prayers as we continue the confirmation process.

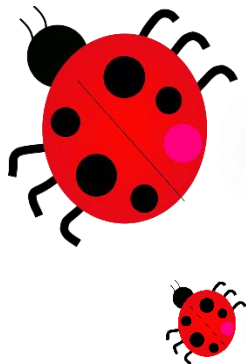
June Anniversaries

04 Mandy & Kevin Moore
05 Ruth & Merlin Ebert
06 Margie & Kevin Lakowske
05 Rich & Danette Zidich
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 Coy & Alex Rudie
30 Todd & Angel Loeffelholz
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 Jeff Burrows
14 Katie Jerman
15 Curly Holz
17 Clarice Stuessel
17 Patty Wiedemann
19 Scott Herrman
20 Alexis Bonilla
22 Danette Zidich
26 Russell Culpitt
26 Larry Humphrey
30 Deanna Hutchinson



June Schedules

Bakery pick-up

6 Paul Foulke
13 Pat & Gail Clark
20 Donna Burnham
27 Cyndi Wise

Tech Team

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

Liturgist

6 Paul Foulke
13 Toni Burrows
20 Amy Kiefer
27 Eileen Gajewsky

Ushers

6 Bob & Cathy Nichols
13 Kurt & Amy Kiefer
20 Peggy Wright
27 Dick & Eileen Gajewsky



Sparta UMC Web Page Update

Our church Web site is updated with a new page that has direct links to our worship services starting with 2020 through current services. You will also find our Chimes archived there starting with 2020. You can find it at: lewaughtal.wixsite.com/spartaumc
Once you are at our Web site, click on the "Stay Connected" link and it will give you options to go the worship or Chimes newsletter sites.

We hope you find this new feature helpful.

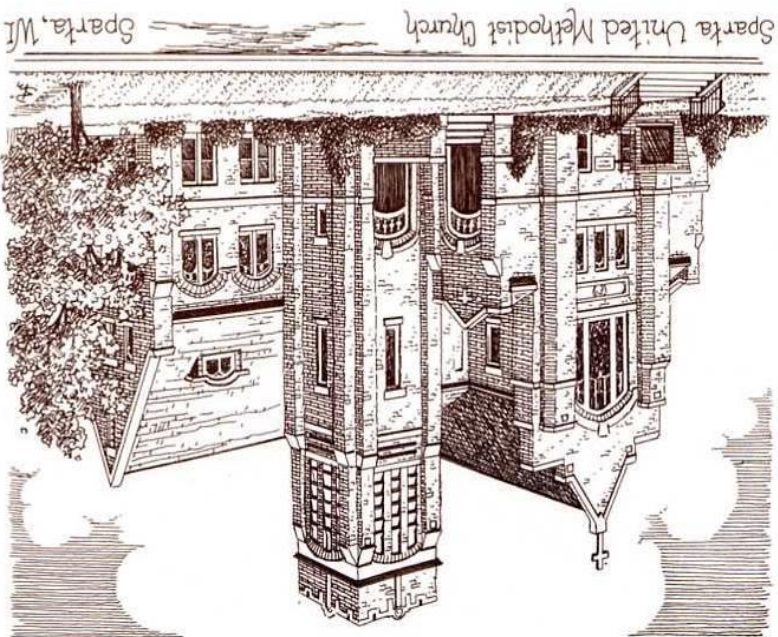
The Chimes

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



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Prepared Especially For:



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

Phone: (608)269-6949

Fax: (608)269-6940

Email: office@spartamethodist.com

Website: lewaughal.wixsite.com/spartaumc

SUMC Worship Schedule

In-house Service

9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings

Online Service

YouTube: Sparta UMC month day year