

“The CHIMES” – September

Volume 59, No. 9

2024



Dear Sparta UMC Family in Christ,

We say goodbye to August 2024 and embrace September with its weather changing. Soon the days will become shorter and the nights longer. Also, soon the hot days will be over and the cold breeze will take place giving us a

hint that the winter is closer.

That is how life is. We have periods of struggles that seems will never go away. But suddenly, the winds of the holy spirit approach and fear, anger and lack of forgiveness, start to melt away; giving room for grace, forgiveness, peace and abundant love; which is at the corner waiting to enter your heart and give you a deep sense of belonging; belonging to Christ, belonging to heaven – *thy kingdom come to earth as it is in heaven*. We all are living in times of transition, both in our beloved United Methodist church, in our nation and in the world. We are all learning how to live again in this post pandemic world that closed us down in a very drastic way making room for new ways to be self, to be church, and to worship the Lord. These moments of changes bring fear, challenges and uncertainty, but they also offer us unique opportunities for spiritual growth and renewal of our faith.

You are not alone: Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand" Isaiah 41:1 (NLT)

In our church, we feel the impact of changes in the general, district and local churches. Our Conference says goodbye to bishop Hee-Soo Jung after twelve years of ministry with us and we welcome Bishop Dan Schwerin who was affirmed at the North Central Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church last July to be the bishop to the Northern Illinois-Wisconsin Episcopal Area. The District North Central gave space for redefinition and today we have 4 districts North East and West, South East and West. We wish DS Tsuker Yang blessings on his retirement and welcome DS Amanda Stein. In all these we see the

Lord's hand as the new leadership is seeking to guide us towards a blessed and prosperous future.

Here at Sparta, I celebrate my second month with joy and thanksgiving as you said goodbye to Rev. Dr. Hae-Jeong Yoon last June and welcome me into the family July 1. I am thankful to God and to all of you for this opportunity to share his blessings among us.

September brings opportunities of renovation as we start the liturgical year with renewed proposals at Sunday school for children, which will begin on September 8, and Bible study on Thursday, September 12, at 2pm, with our brother Paul Foulke with a journey in the gospel of Mark. The Circles gathering and studies return and so the committees in full capacity of developing the ministry envisioned from God to Sparta UMC. These initiatives are ways to strengthen our community ties and our spiritual journey.

Additionally, I am excited to announce that we will be having a weekly prayer meeting. We are still defining the best day and time, but I would like to suggest an informal title for our meeting: "Time of Renewal". I hope it will be a space where we can reconnect with God and each other, seeking wisdom and strength to face the challenges that lies ahead. If you have a suggestion and are willing to share, come to the pastor study and lets talk. We are all here to administrate God's agenda for Sparta UMC. As good stewards of what the Lord trusts us, let us seek, act and celebrate together.

I deeply appreciate each and every one of you who has supported the church with your prayers, time, talents and gifts. Your generosity is vital to continuing our mission of being a living, relevant community committed to the Kingdom of God.

As we move into autumn and prepare for the celebrations of Thanksgiving and Advent, I invite everyone to reflect on how we can, together, build a church that is a beacon of hope and faith among the changes around us. May we unite in prayer and action, confident that God is with us every step of the way.

With gratitude and hope,
Rev. Lourdes Magalhães

The Church's Need to Receive or the Givers Need to Give

When I was first learning about stewardship early in my ministry, I heard someone say, "Good stewardship practices focus on the giver's need to give, rather than the church's need for money." At the time, I didn't buy it. To my cynical ears, it sounded like a line. Today (many years later), I can say that I was wrong.

We love our churches. We want them to thrive and succeed. They are near and dear to our hearts. So when the churches faces financial challenges, we want to plead with people how important it is to keep the ministries of our beloved church going. We need to pay the bills. Throw in the anxiety that surrounds any financial topic, we may want to push the point. The truth is the church's mission is not to keep existing. In fact, we love our churches because of the ways God has touched our lives through them —ceremonies and rituals, helping us grow in faith and connection. Likewise, a church's teaching about faithful stewardship should be centered on helping people learn about the place of money in a Christian's walk of faith. It's about discipleship and partnering with God to make a positive difference in the world — whether people do that by being generous with the church or other organizations. (Note: I do believe people who are generous as a part of their faith include the church in their generosity if the church is faithfully living out its mission.)

Tithing benefits the giver as much as it strengthens the mission and ministry of the church — especially in the midst of our materialistic and consumerist society. We are immersed in a culture that feeds the appetite for more and bigger and that fosters that self-worth is found in material wealth and happiness comes by possession. As one person once said, "We buy things we don't even need with money we don't even have to impress people we don't even know!"

At the root, these are spiritual problems, leading to continued discontent, discouragement, and unhappiness. We can never earn enough to be happy. In fact, studies have shown that people believe all they need is more money to be happy, when in reality, an academic study concluded that money can only boost happiness up to a certain point (at about \$75,000 in annual income).

Practices like embracing gratitude do lead to more contentment. For instance, consider making a list of the things in your life for which you are grateful. It does

not have to be long or take much time. Taking time to focus on what you have rather than concentrating on what you do not can be transformative.

Beyond embracing gratitude, consider the following questions:

- How does living generously help you see the world through God's eyes?
- How is your own perspective shaped by materialism, acquisition, and the desire to possess? How is it shaped by the wisdom of God? How do you resolve tensions?

~ Rev. Jason Mahnke, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

Nurture Update..



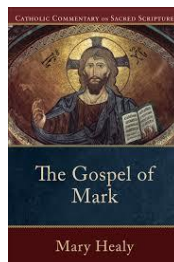
September—a time to reflect on the easy going days of summer! But...then we shift our thoughts to renewed energy, new ideas, productive plans and programming, and meaningful relationships with God, each other and our community!

September 8 – First day of Sunday school 9 a.m. May God bless our faithful teachers, helpers, children and families. Ages 3-12 are welcome. Please invite neighbors and friends.

Upcoming **Bible Studies** will be offered in the coming weeks.

Finally, we are so happy to welcome **Pastor Lourdes**. Please join us for worship in person or online. "Stay connected to God—stay connected to each other."

The Book of Mark Bible Study



This new bible study begins Thursday, September 12 at 2 p.m. in the classroom. Pastor Paul Foulke will lead the study. All you need is a bible.

Thank You!

Thank you Laurie Bartholomew with the assistance of Craig - the gardening around the church and parsonage is simply amazing. Your many hours of hard work is definitely noticed and appreciated.

Thank you to Scott and Pete for the continued mowing of both properties. Our lawns are some of the best-looking lawns in town!

Thank you Rich Zidich for your donation of children's' books. They are much appreciated.

You all are such great givers!
Margie Lakowske

Ron and I cannot **thank you** all enough for your prayers, cards and flowers. I praise God, for His goodness and peace we received during Ron's hospital stay. Additionally, we extend our wholehearted appreciation for our church families acts of kindness. God's Blessings
Ron and Donna Burnham

Pizza and a Movie



night this month is **September 21** 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 Jensen at 608-343-3029 before noon on September 21 if you will be attending so we know how much pizza to order.



August's Movie is: "The Blind"

Set in the 1960s South and shot on location in Louisiana, **THE BLIND** shares never-before-revealed aspects of Phil Robertson's (*Duck Dynasty*) life as he seeks to conquer the shame of his past, addiction, and complicated family dynamics -- ultimately finding redemption in an unlikely place. "It was important to us that the film be real," said Willie Robertson, Phil's son. "The transformation of Phil proves that anyone can change and that there is always hope." Rated PG-13.



Needing a card for someone special?

Altar Plants



United Women in Faith (UWIF) would like to thank all those who signed up for one or more plant(s) on one or multiple dates for 2023. The calendars are up for 2024. Each date has two lines for one plant per line.

Plants are \$5.50 each or two for \$11. Plant money goes to Eileen Gajewsky, UMW treasurer, who pays the invoice from Sparta Floral quarterly.

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



You can now find new and recycled cards for all occasions: Birthdays, Anniversaries, Weddings, Thank You, 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 if you'd like to check them out!



"The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest."

Psalm 85:12

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 **September 8**. 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 the church (269-6949.)

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

Chancel Choir starting soon!



Singers! For those of you who enjoy singing in a choir, the United Methodist Chancel Choir will be starting again this fall. The first rehearsal will be **Wed. Sept. 4 at 7 – 8 PM**. We will meet in the choir room. Our first Sunday will be Sept. 8 at 9 am. We

welcome all who love to sing. We sing a variety of traditional contemporary arrangements.

Come and join us for some wonderful times praising the Lord. Contact Ellen Hemstock @ 608-633-0889 with questions.

Our Community in Concert

Our Community in Concert: Saturday, October 19 from 2:00-4:00 pm in the Sanctuary. Be prepared for an enjoyable, relaxing afternoon. Free admission with light refreshments following the concert.



- SUMMIT Spirits will meet on Tuesday, September 3 at 6:30
- The Ministerial Committee will meet on Wednesday, September 4 at noon.
- Nurture will meet on Thursday, September 5 at 6 p.m.
- Lois Circle will Tuesday, September 10 in the small kitchen at 1 p.m.
- Wesleyan Circle will meet on Tuesday, September 10 in the Gathering Place at 6:00 p.m.
- Records & History will meet Wednesday, September 11 at 9 a.m. in the library.
- Pizza and a movie will be Saturday, September 21 at 6 p.m. in the small kitchen for pizza and 6:30 in the chapel for the movie, "The Blind."
- Servant Leadership Board will meet on Tuesday, September 17 at 6 p.m.
- The Finance Committee will meet on Tuesday, September 24 at 6 p.m.
- October *Chimes* newsletter deadline is Tuesday, September 24 by noon.

Volunteers Needed!

The Ecumenical Food Pantry is in need of additional volunteers. Our church is responsible for covering 12 2-hour slots each month. Currently, we have four of those slots covered by Methodists with volunteers from other churches or myself working the rest. Paul has been working one shift, but with his recent falls he may need to stop. We need two volunteers for the fourth Tuesday from 10-noon and two volunteers 10-noon whenever there is a fifth Tuesday in a month. (this happens 4 times a year) It would also be nice to have someone who could sub on a Tuesday when needed. If you are interested in volunteering give me a call at 608-343-4068. Thank you!

Lori Ascher- Pantry President

HELLO September



September Anniversaries

03 Carolyn & Kevin Lieder
09 Jane & Duane Hobson
14 Sara & Elliot Blackdeer
15 Carson & Mindy Wiedemann
17 Julie & Dennis Hanson
17 Ron & Kristine Phillips
30 Scott & Kelly Lakowske

September Birthdays

01 Addison Alvarado
02 Mary Borreson
02 Ann Olson
03 Amy Kiefer
06 Sue Harrie
08 Judy Fuhrmann
10 Jean Evans
10 Marcia Knoll
10 Dave Wiedemann
11 Grace Johnson
12 Allen Erickson
12 Maxine Gudbaur
15 Damijon Talsky
18 Yvonne Chamberlain
20 Wayne Johnson
21 Emmersyn Alvarado
21 Lisa Arvizu
21 Gail Clark
22 Chuck Adams
23 Kevin Lieder
27 Teresa Brown
27 Laurie Hesselberg
28 Chris Angle
28 Sherry Breeser
28 Cyndi Wise
30 Mindy Wiedemann



Ushers

1 Bob & Cathy Nichols
8 Joe & Betsy Tadisch
15 Rich & Danette Zidich & Peggy
22 Kurt & Amy Kiefer
29 Russ & Tina Janzen

Tech Team

1 Ben Simplot & Hailee Scheurich
8 Toni Jensen & Amy Kiefer
15 Ron & Kristine Phillips
22 Cheryl Isensee & Annabelle Von Ruden
29 Annebelle Von Ruden & Toni Jensen

Liturgist

1 Annabelle Von Ruden
8 Beth Nowak
15 Marty Walley
22 Judy Fuhrman
29 Kristine Phillips



CHANGING THE WORLD
ONE PAIR AT A TIME

Thank you to all who have donated to Soles4Souls! We have collected 1336 pair through the year so far!



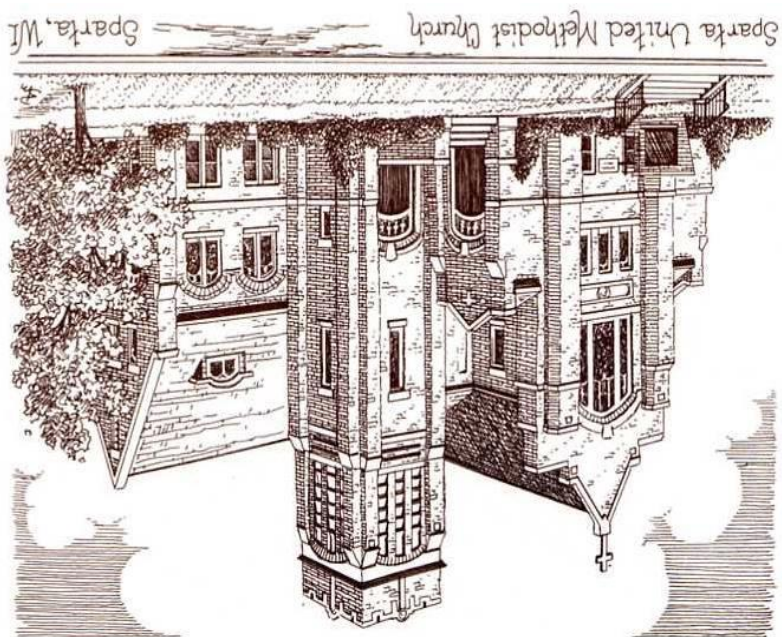
The Chimes

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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Email: office@spartamethodist.com

Website: spartaumc.net

SUMC Worship Schedule

In-house Service

9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings

Livestream Service

9:00 a.m. on Facebook

Online Service

YouTube: Sparta UMC month day year