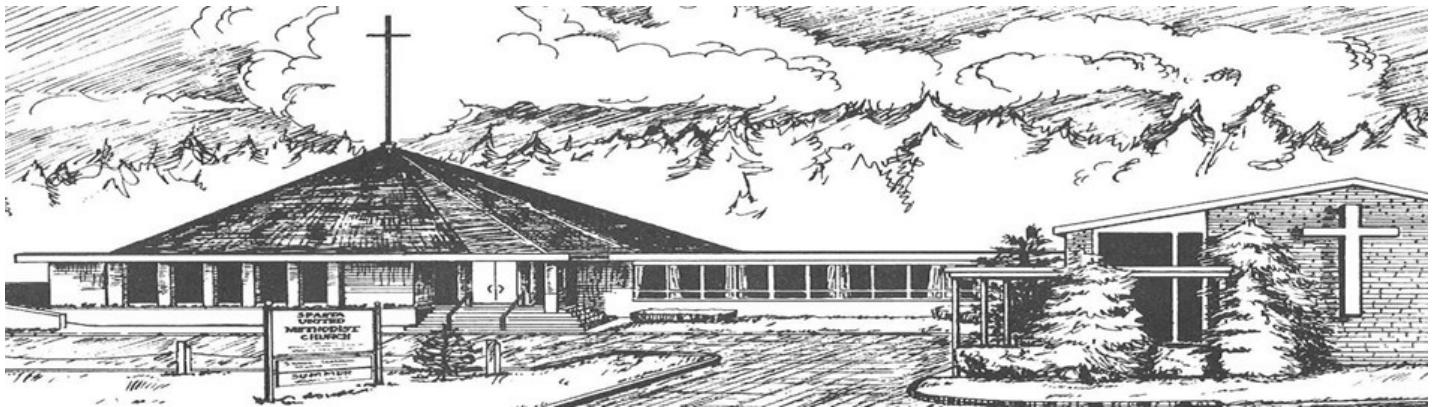


SPARTA

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2021

Dear Friends,

The air was cold and crisp this morning, a sign that the season has changed and Autumn is upon us. With the coming of Fall, Sunday School is up and running again in our building, the choir is back live and in person each Sunday. We have coffee hour each week after worship. Small group participation continues to be strong, and worship attendance is slowly coming back, and we are experiencing new visitors just about every Sunday. Though the live-stream views are down from when we were totally virtual, we are still averaging about 190 views per week reaching people at all different times of the day and night, something that we're not able to do when we are limited to just Sunday mornings.

In other words, I have great optimism for the ministry of Sparta United Methodist Church and what we can continue to do to transform people's lives after the example of Jesus Christ. In looking ahead, there are several things that are in the planning stages for the next few months. While some are waiting for the leaves to change and drop, I see the vibrancy of color as a perfect metaphor for what God has in store for us in the church. After a somewhat challenging two years.

I see some great opportunities for us to re-engage with one another, even if it is a bit different than it was before. If there is anything we need, and crave, in this time is one another. Even with the rise in the Delta variant, so many have learned how to care for themselves and one another safely, and coming together is far more possible.

Over the past four to six weeks, we have experienced an increase in visitors who are looking for a welcoming, open church for themselves and their families. Some have felt harmed and hurt by some arm of the church, and they are expressing a sense of acceptance and welcome at Sparta UMC that brings blessing to them. We will be receiving new members in the month of November, and anyone interested in church membership should contact me as soon as possible.

A highly successful Earthkeepers program that was held in our pavilion brought about 60 children and helpers to learn about God's world and God's word, and has led us to start in person Sunday School in September, with youth programming coming along soon. This will be assisted by a new team of folks who have committed themselves to form a Children's and Youth Committee/Team/Task Force (you get to choose the name) that will be focusing on bringing our youth program to a new level.

The desk in my office faces the windows, and I keep the curtains open at all times so that I can see the wonder of God's creation at just about any moment. I also can see the outdoor chapel and the labyrinth, and I thank God that regularly, I see people coming to our church to use both – a sign that there is a yearning to connect with the Divine presence, with the Spirit of God that dwells with us each day. That alone is a sign that even though the days are growing shorter, that winter will be upon us soon, that leaves will need to be raked, and we are all a little-bit worn out by COVID, there is still life – it is abundant – and it is God's gift to us.

Steve

For all Zoom Gatherings, you may use either the Video Link or the Phone in # with ID #

BEYOND THE BASICS - (ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL)

Sunday Mornings at 9:30 a.m.

Join us in Room 8 **OR** Zoom Video Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/719693907>

One tap mobile (from Smart Phone): +16468769923, 719693907#

Dial by your location (other phones: +1 646 876 9923 Meeting ID: 719 693 907

Passcode: 7773

MONDAY NIGHT STUDY GROUP - 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Meeting by ZOOM

Video Link: <https://zoom.us/j/771970415> **Passcode: 7773**

Dial in by phone: +1 646 876 9923, Meeting # 771 970 415

New Book Study starts Monday, October 4th

Solus Jesus

By Emily Swan and Ken Wilson

In this groundbreaking work, Emily Swan and Ken Wilson claim the authority of the church is shifting back to where it should be: in Jesus. For Christians looking for guidance on how to address distressing issues of injustice; for help understanding how they can faithfully follow Jesus and love their neighbors *as themselves*; and for practices for how to experience the living Jesus and his Spirit of love—*Solus Jesus* is the book for you.

The book may be purchased as a Kindle download,
or is available on line or ordered from the local bookstore: ISBN # 978-1641800167. We can also order it for you through the office – just notify Pastor Steve

HEALTHIER LIVING GROUP

Every **TUESDAY** Morning at 10:00 a.m. - **HEALTHIER LIVING GROUP**

Topic: Healthier Living Group - Tuesday 10:00 AM Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83759957090?pwd=ZlhkbUJlU041TVF0ZmdkYlo1eUpnQT09>

Meeting ID: 837 5995 7090 Passcode: 750689

Dial by your location 1 646 876 9923 US Meeting ID: 837 5995 7090 Passcode: 750689

UMW BOOK GROUP

THE 2ND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH IS UMW BOOK GROUP

Topic: UMW Book Group - 10:00 am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88594597523?pwd=QnFLQXlRbUJlU041TVF0ZmdkYlo1eUpnQT09>

Meeting ID: 885 9459 7523 Passcode: 390909

Dial by your location 1 646 876 9923 Meeting ID: 885 9459 7523 Passcode: 390909

WEDNESDAY MORNING MEN'S STUDY

Wednesday Mornings at 7:30 a.m. via ZOOM.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/716333645?pwd=eVdzdjZhcGtZTUZYlBkNjIvdU5xUT09>

Password 7773

READING TOGETHER/BIBLE STUDY

Friday's at 10:00 a.m.

Practicing Resurrection by Eugene Peterson

Join Zoom Video Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/389284226>

Alternate Phone in #: +1 646 876 9923; Meeting ID: 389 284 226

Passcode: 7773

SATURDAY BRUNCH GATHERING

Join a ZOOM gathering on Saturday mornings at 10:00 a.m. just to touch base and connect with others from the congregation just to check in and share with each other

Join Zoom Video Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/826747498>

Phone in #: +1 646 876 9923; Meeting ID: 826 747 498

Passcode: 7773

October 2021

Contemplative Worship

Join us for Contemplative Worship
October 6th at 12:15 p.m. in the Sanctuary



UMW

Book Group Discusses *The Hate U Give*

On October 12th at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom, the United Methodist Women will discuss *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas. It is in many libraries and is a quick and good read. On the front fly of the book it says: "Angie Thomas's searing debut about an ordinary girl in extraordinary circumstances addresses issues of racism and police violence with intelligence, heart, and unflinching honesty. Join us in the conversation.

On November 9th, we will be planning books to read in the coming year of 2022. If you want to have input into the selection, be sure to come (again on zoom). You can go to unitedmethodistwomen.org and then click on Reading Program you can look at or download the updated 2021-2022 Reading Program Catalog. Many of our books come from this catalog of suggested reading, but we also do select books not in the catalog.

Our December book is *Sum It Up: A Thousand and Ninety-eight Victories, A Couple of Irrelevant Losses, and A Life in Perspective* by Pat Summitt.

Growing Older Gracefully Is Healthier Living Book

Every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom, the Healthier Living group will be discussing *The Gift of Years---Growing Older Gracefully* by Joan Chittister. The group has found this to be a helpful book as it looks at the many issues of aging. We plan to be reading this book through the end of the year and into 2022---plenty of time for you to get the book and join us.

Hope to see you.

Church & Society



The Church and Society Committee
of the Sparta United Methodist Church

Pursuing Peace; Seeking Justice; Living Faith

Welcoming and Supporting Newly Arriving Afghan Refugees

In late August, we watched with heavy hearts on TV, crowds of desperate Afghan people, many with babies in their arms and little children tagging behind them, rushing through the airport gates hoping to board a plane to leave Kabul. They were leaving their homeland for fear they would be killed by the Taliban if they stayed behind because they had worked with the US military during the last 20 years the Americans were fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan. They are people without a country, home, neighbors, friends, or relatives. They have no possessions, other than the clothes they wore when they left Afghanistan.

Those who came to the US are housed temporarily, until they are vetted by the US government, at military bases in Virginia, Wisconsin, Texas, New Mexico, and the Fort Dix military base in New Jersey.

There are an estimated 156,400 Afghan refugees in the US, with about 9,500 in New Jersey.

How you can help:

UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) is primary partner of **CWS** (Church World Service) in refugee resettlement. CWS staff have been deployed to designated military bases to assist with immediate processing of refugees. A CWS nationwide network is preparing to support Afghan families with housing, legal assistance, case management, mental health support, medical care, and school enrollment. CWS needs our support: You can donate to CWS for Resettlement of Afghan Refugees by going to its website: <https://cwsglobal.org/take-action/afghan-siv-and-refugee-program/>

One World One Love: ONEWORLDONELOVENJ.ORG based in Jersey City - welcomes refugees, offers temporary housing, language assistance, tutoring, mentoring, and more. Works with several partner agencies. Check out its website if you'd like to volunteer or to just learn more about it.

The Church and Society Committee will inform you on additional actions we can take as individuals or as a congregation.

It is clear that there will be little development of life here in the future if we do not protect and foster the living forms of this continent. To do this, a change must occur deep in our souls. ---Thomas Berry in the book *The Sacred Universe*--

Church & Society

“Environmental Corner”



BOO!!!!

The spooky holiday is quickly approaching. But much more frightening than the scariest costume is the amount of waste that the celebration of Halloween can generate. It's a busy world, and so much of what we do is for expedience. **But**, with a bit of effort and thought, we can be supporting the health of the planet, rather than adding to the destruction. Here are just a few tips to bear in mind:

COSTUMES: We are a disposable economy. So many of the cheaply manufactured costumes end up in the landfill. Suggestions:



Utilize clothing in creative ways that children actually wear and will wear again: Hats with animal designs (pair with monochromatic clothing to match the hat), superhero hoodies and sweatshirts, pajamas with cartoon characters, etc.



For adult costumes, explore your own closet. A little imagination can go a long way.



Costume swap with your friends.



Donate costumes to thrift shops. (Our own Church Mouse sells many costumes every Halloween.)

TRICK OR TREATING: During this pandemic it may not be possible, but eliminate the distribution of many individually wrapped candies wherever and however you are able.



Decorate a plain canvas tote for the collection of candy.

PUMPKINS: They have usefulness beyond the jack-o-lantern.



Roast and eat the pumpkin seeds. It's nourishing and easy to do.



Utilize the flesh of the pumpkin. Many recipes exist on line for pies, muffins, soups, etc.



Carve, don't paint! Carved pumpkins can be composted; painted ones cannot.

DECORATIONS: Recycle batteries properly. (Many lighted decorations, scary figures that move, etc. require batteries.)

Church Mouse Thrift Shop



Fall is in full swing at the Thrift Shop! We have Halloween costumes and fall decorations for you.

On display is a great selection of coats, scarves, and boots. And our jewelry department has reopened and expanded.

Sales are frequent and our prices are right. Come on down; you'll be glad you did!

As always, our proceeds go to missions, local and worldwide. Thanks for your support!

Store Hours:

Wednesday and Saturday: 10-2

Thursday and Friday: 1-4

Altar Flower Update

Changes in Altar Flower Billing

The Flower Box has announced that as of October 1st they will no longer bill flower donors directly. Instead they will bill the church, and the church will bill you. We are currently working out the details. Stay tuned!

In the meantime, donations are still needed for October 31, November 7, November 14, and December 5.

Worship Leaders

OCTOBER WORSHIP LEADERS

	10:30 a.m.
October 3	Steve Magnotta
October 10	Debbie Gilone
October 17	Merry Mans
October 24	Donna Scott
October 31	Mike Vrabel

Blessing of the Animals

Blessing of the Animals Service

On Sunday, October 10th, there will be a special Blessing of the Animals Service at 9:00 a.m. in the pavilion behind the church. You are invited to bring your pets to be blessed and to celebrate their important place in our lives. There will still be a 10:30 am service in the sanctuary and via Facebook Live that day as well.



HAPPY
HALLOWEEN

UMW

Greater New Jersey Conference United Methodist Women Annual Fall 2021 Meeting



EQUITY IN VOTING

(based on Micah 6:8)

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, Poor People's Campaign

October 16, 2021 Place: ZOOM

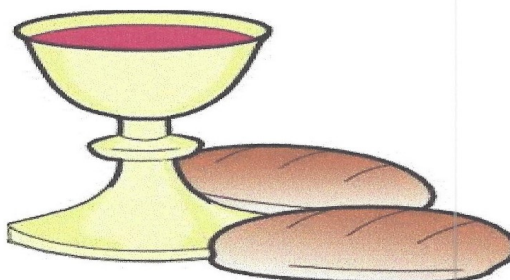
To register: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

9:30 gathering, 10:00 program begins, followed by Business Meeting (ends at 12:30)

Minutes from GNJ UMW Annual Meeting 2020 can be found using this link: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uonM1nWmZeJKeCgij08kFXaeflzOfmGBhArba1vGMlo/edit?usp=sharing>

SKYLANDS DISTRICT UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Annual Fall Meeting And Communion Brunch



**Saturday, October 23, 2021
10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

Guest Speaker: Clara Ester

**Retired United Methodist Deaconess and National Vice
President of United Methodist Women**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85434519793?pwd=UDZQQmJyU1BYbVVkYWMyQXNLa1plUT09>

Dial by your location

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 854 3451 9793

Passcode: 068857

SAVE THE DATE!!!

United Methodist Women

SUMW - Nomination Form for Special Mission Recognition



Special Mission Recognition (SMR) is a way for Sparta United Methodist Women to honor individuals in the church for outstanding mission service. Persons nominated should be active in mission work in church and beyond, and representative of the purpose of the United Methodist Women. Anyone in the Sparta United Methodist Church can nominate an individual using this form. **All nominations must be received by October 15, 2021.**

From your list of nominees, UMW Officers, Board Members, and past recipients will vote to our select 2 recipients.

The names of the Honorees are held in secret until they are announced in a SUMC worship service in the spring. Each Honoree is presented with a SMR Pin, a donation to UMW Mission is made in their name, and they will be honored by the District UMW at our Spring Celebration in 2022.

SMR Nominees (may nominate 2): _____

Please list all mission activity these persons are involved in:

Person making the nomination: _____

After completion, this form can be put in UMW mail slot. Thank you.

SPARTA

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

71 Sparta Avenue

Sparta, NJ 07871

973-729-7773

spartaumc.org

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Thrift Shop

973-729-9121

Wednesday 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Thursday 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Friday 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



The **DEADLINE** for the
November Newsletter
is **October 22nd**