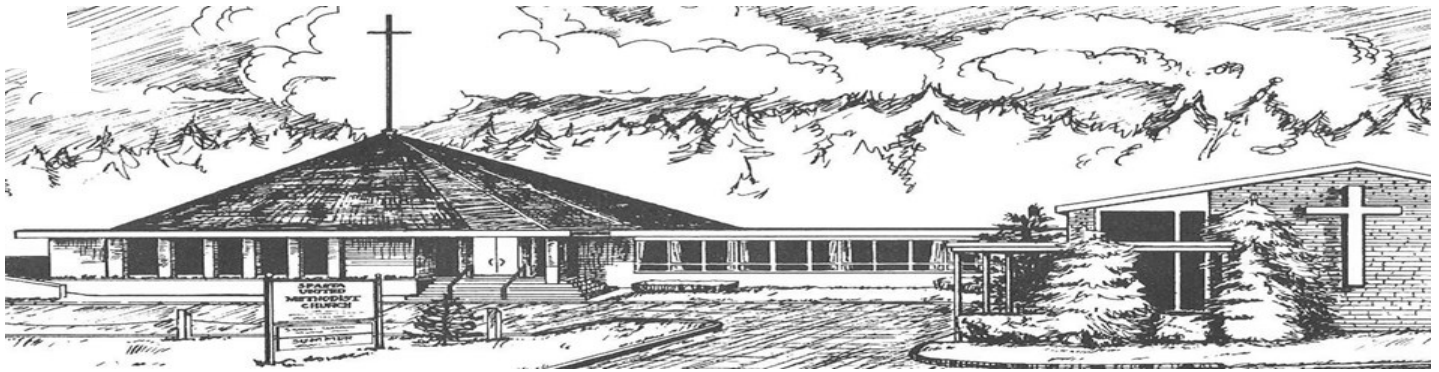


# SPARTA

## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



## NEWSLETTER—JULY/AUGUST

Dear Friends,

*Summertime and the livin' is easy ...* So goes the opening line of the Gershwin opera *Porgy and Bess* with lyrics by DuBose Hayward. Whoever said that summer was a time of easy living? The summer is a time when life is at its fullest. Trees, flowers, crops continue to thrive. The pace of life, while different than the September-June school year, is just as hectic. Drive to the shore? Well, it's hard to pick the right time as traffic on the Garden State Parkway is always a gamble. And life in the church doesn't really slow down at all.

As I write, Earthkeepers is going on all around me in the church. Participants and volunteers are all over the place. The Church Mouse continues to draw in customers at record numbers. Our small groups continue to run; the early service meets in the outdoor chapel at 8:45 and family worship continues at 10:30. Planning for the fall and winter seasons is going ahead at full speed. This is no dormant time for the church, and the living isn't easy, but it is fruitful and invigorating. A new group of people are asking to be received as professing members of the church.

This is why it is so important that we as a congregation continue to support our ministries with our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness. None of this happens without the community coming together in various ways. We are soon to face a crossroads as a congregation. Giving has been stagnant for the past several years while expenses increase. There is an increased need for volunteers in many of our ministries, and we need more people willing to step into leadership roles so that the many aspects of serving God and neighbor can be met. I am grateful for those who are already responding with their generosity of time, talents and treasures, but we need all who are able to take a leap of faith so that we can not only maintain ministry, but increase it and grow to meet the needs of those around us.

Perhaps in this season "when the living is easy" we can all take the time to reevaluate how we can all be serving God and neighbor through the Sparta United Methodist Church so that we might continue to be a church for all people, where all means all.

In Christ,

Pastor Steve

# Altar Flowers

Altar flowers are a way to acknowledge someone special or highlight an important occasion.

Many thanks to all who have requested altar flowers. Requests are now being taken for August 4th, 11th, and 18th, as well as September 1, 8, 22, or 29.

Altar flowers cost \$30. We keep costs low by reusing containers and vases. Please pay the church directly and include a note that the funds are for Altar Flowers and the date chosen.

When requesting flowers please provide your name, phone number, email address and dedication. Let us know if you plan to take the flowers after the 10:30 service, or if you want them delivered to someone needing a pick-me-up.

Use this [link](#) to reserve your flowers.

Any questions? Contact Yvonne Roux, [yrouxrings@gmail.com](mailto:yrouxrings@gmail.com), or 973-534-6129.

# Art Show

Mark your calendars for September 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> and start spreading the word about our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Art Show and Sale.

On Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Demarest Hall will be filled with twenty amazing artists. Their art and photography for sale includes originals, portfolio pieces, prints and even cards. With a wide range of prices, you are sure to find a special piece of art to own or give as a gift. 20% of all sales will be donated to the church for youth activities.

Kicking off the show is a “Meet the Artist” reception on Friday evening, September 13<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. This is an opportunity to meet the artists and preview the show while enjoying refreshments catered by our own Chef, Steve Bechtold.

You are encouraged to bring family, friends, and neighbors. This is a wonderful way to share the warmth and love of our church by reaching out to a wider community.

# Church & Society



The Church and Society Committee  
of the Sparta United Methodist Church  
Pursuing Peace; Seeking Justice; Living Faith

THANK YOU, CONGREGATION!

## **SUMC Members Sign Letter to Members of Congress in Support of the Farm Bill and SNAP**

The Church and Society Committee thanks members of the Congregation who signed letters to our members of Congress after the worship service on May 26, 2024, in support of the pending Farm legislation, which includes SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).

The Farm bill is a package of legislation passed by Congress every five years; it affects farming, from farmer training to support for sustainable farming practices, to crop insurance for farmers, and much more. There are more than 2 million farms covering 475 million acres in the U.S. This critical bipartisan legislation benefits every state in the country.

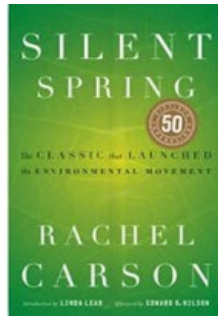
In addition, the Farm bill's nutrition assistance programs help low-income families to have food on their tables. Hunger exists in the U.S. just as it does overseas. In the U.S. low-income families spend a greater share of their income on food, and more than one in five children are at risk of hunger. Forty-one million people are now served by the Supplemental Nutrition Insurance Program (SNAP). The Farm bill also provides funding to reduce hunger and malnutrition for people around the world who live in areas where there is a hunger crisis due to war or climate change.

We urged our members of congress to support the following provisions in the bill: to protect SNAP from funding cuts, to increase funding for fresh produce through the GUSNIP Nutrition Assistance Program, and to reauthorize the Food for Peace global nutrition program no less than its current amount of \$2.5 billion annually.

The Church and Society Committee will inform the congregation as the legislation moves in Congress.

# Church & Society

## ENVIRONMENTAL CORNER



It's been more than sixty years since the landmark book, *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson, was published. Carson foretells the devastation of the planet that will be caused by human attempts to control nature through the use of chemicals. She is credited with initiating the contemporary environmental movement. Carson's voice remains relevant today as we have learned of the harmful effects of pesticides, such as DDT. As you work in your garden throughout this summer growing season, seek alternate solutions to controlling the pests that are enjoying your vegetables before you have the opportunity to harvest them. Although there are commercially produced safe pesticides, using natural substances that you already have in your home can be just as effective, as well as economical. Check out the many websites that offer natural solutions to free your garden of pests. You might be surprised how you can conquer the enemies attacking your vegetables with cinnamon, table salt, and apple cider vinegar.

# Church Mouse

## Mark your calendars for Changeover and Restocking Day!!

Changeover is Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup> starting at 12 noon to 3:30 p.m. and Restocking day is Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 a.m.

Volunteers are desperately needed for both. This is a major event for the Thrift Shop success and survival.

Please contact Jackie with any questions.

Thank you



**SHOP HOURS: WED & SAT: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Thurs & Fri: 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

# Pet Food Drive

Did you know that the Sparta Community Food Pantry collects pet food as part of its pet ministry? The Food Pantry provides groceries for those in need in our area, and also recognizes the important emotional support and companionship pets provide.

We will be collecting donations of dry and canned food for dogs and cats during the month of July. When doing your grocery shopping this month, put some extra dog and cat food in your grocery cart to add to the collection bin located in the Narthex. The Food Pantry also accepts pet food donations year-round.



The Sparta Community Food Pantry is located at 99 Demarest Road, Sparta, NJ 07871 (near the Sparta Shop Rite); the continued hours of operation are Wednesdays 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Thursdays 4:30 pm to 6:30pm, and Fridays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. <https://www.thespartacommunityfoodpantry.com/>

Please help by providing a meal for a pet in need.

# Small Group Opportunities

*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. in Room 8

## **MONDAY NIGHT**

Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM

The Monday Night Group will be reading *Saving Jesus From the Church* by Robin R. Meyers. All are welcome to join for this book discussion held on ZOOM from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Even if you can't come each week, please feel free to join whenever you can. If you need help finding the book, please see Pastor Steve

The link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/771970415?pwd=bFdUQk9YQUlyZXRhYUZnNVhRVEZvUT09>.

## **HEALTHIER LIVING GROUP**

**PLEASE NOTE---THE GROUP WILL NOT BE MEETING UNTIL  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2024! Every TUESDAY Morning at 10:30 a.m.** Join Zoom Meeting  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85294018790?pwd=bScXqgjh6RICDFWN93I16\\_aMcguqxFl](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85294018790?pwd=bScXqgjh6RICDFWN93I16_aMcguqxFl)

Meeting ID: 852 9401 8790 Passcode: 389789

One tap mobile +16465588656,,85294018790#

Dial by your location +1 646 558 8656 Meeting ID: 852 9401 8790

## **UMW BOOK GROUP-**

THE 2<sup>ND</sup> WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH IS UMW BOOK GROUP

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89033468706?pwd=M3FYTHZPcm55Sm1jdGIRckRXTjgrQT09>

Meeting ID: 890 3346 8706 Passcode: 681008 -- One tap mobile +13017158592,,89033468706#

Dial by your location: 1 301 715 8592, Meeting ID: 890 3346 8706

## **WEDNESDAY MORNING MEN'S STUDY**

Wednesday Mornings at 7:15 a.m.

Angelo's Franklin Diner

## **READING TOGETHER/BIBLE STUDY**

Friday's at 10:00 a.m. If God Is Love Don't Be a Jerk

Book by John Pavlovitz

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

Alternate Phone in #: +1 646 876 9923; Meeting ID: 389 284 226 -- Passcode: 7773

## **SATURDAY PRAYERS & CONVERSATION GATHERING**

Join a ZOOM gathering on Saturday mornings at 10:30 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

# Summer Word Fun

## SUMMER WORD SEARCH

I L O O P S T R O H S O  
 P L K C O L B N U S Q A  
 L S S L P A W U E J Q W  
 B U U L S D V F U R A I  
 T M N F I N O N C T C E  
 I M N H C A E B E S O D  
 U E Y B L S V R B U F H  
 S R V H E Z M E R G A L  
 M A E R C E C I A U M T  
 I Y K Y L U J I B A I F  
 W V N O I T A C A V L K  
 S U N G L A S S E S Y Z

AUGUST  
 BARBECUE  
 BEACH  
 FAMILY  
 FUN  
 HOT  
 ICE CREAM  
 JULY  
 JUNE  
 POOL



POPSICLE  
 SANDALS  
 SHORTS  
 SUMMER  
 SUNBLOCK  
 SUNGLASSES  
 SUNNY  
 SWIMSUIT  
 VACATION  
 WATERMELON

SIMPLYLOVECOLORING.COM

## Summer Time

1 Parrot 2 Watermelon 3 Whale  
 4 Bird 5 Palm 6 Airplane 7 Sunscreen  
 8 Cocktail 9 Skydiving 10 Sun

dreamstime.com

ID 166337691 © Gulnara Sabirova

# SPARTA

## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

71 Sparta Avenue

Sparta, NJ 07871

973-729-7773

[spartaumc.org](http://spartaumc.org)

### Inside This Issue:

Altar Flowers	2	Pet Food Drive	5
Art Show	2	Small Groups	6
Church & Society	3,4	Summer Word Fun	7
Church Mouse	5		

### 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.

