

**SPARTA**  
**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
*Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors*

December 22, 2024 10:30 a.m.

***The Fourth Sunday of Advent***

Prelude *Bring Your Torch, Jeanette, Isabella*  
French Traditional  
Arranged by Daniel Kelley; Last Resort Music, Inc. © 1998  
**Violin: Julia Juan**

Bell Tree *Away in a Manger* Abigail Juan

\*Call to Worship

God has done great things for us!

**God's love is heralded in the promise of Christ.**

Holy is God's name!

**God's promises are fulfilled in the coming of Christ.**

God's mercy extends from generation to generation.

**God's salvation is offered in the gift of Christ.**

\*The Lighting of the Advent Wreath: The Candle of Joy

\*Opening Song *Joy to the World* UMH 246

Congregational Prayer

**Loving God, even amid this season of goodwill, we confess that in spite of holiday cheer, stress and anxiety rule our lives. We miss the reason for the season, focusing instead on Christmas celebrations, long to-do lists, and trying to get all the preparations done. We fail to think about your reordered world where the lowly are lifted up and the hungry are filled with good things. Help us adjust our Christmas priorities, that we might join with you, O God, in preparing a world that welcomes the one who brings us hope, peace, love and joy, Jesus the Christ, who taught us to pray:**

The Lord's Prayer Ian Good

Anthem *The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy*  
West Indies Carol (Trinidad)  
Arranged by Andre J. Thomas; Heritage Music Press © 2012  
**Drums: Cullen Kempson**

A Time for Young Disciples

Song of Preparation *Love Has Come* Verse 1 W & S 3059

Reading of the Scripture *Matthew 1:18-25*

*Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.*

The Message *Christmas Presents*

This Week in the Life of the Church

The Offering of Our Gifts and our Prayers

\*Closing Song *What Child is This* UMH 219

\*Sending Forth

Postlude *Angels We Have Heard on High* Traditional  
Arranged by Daniel Kelley; Last Resort Music, Inc. © 1998  
**Violin: Julia Juan**

\*Stand if able

**WELCOME TO ALL**

Who hope for a better world  
& all who have lost hope:  
Believers and seekers  
Conventional Christians & questioning skeptics  
Women, men, youth and children  
Of all sexual orientations & gender identities  
Of all races and cultures,  
Of all income levels  
Of all social classes  
Of all physical & mental abilities.

**COME AS YOU ARE . . .**

**YOU ARE WELCOME!**

SPARTA  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
Ministry Team

MINISTERS.....Every member of Sparta UMC  
PASTOR..... Rev. Dr. Steven Bechtold  
PASTOR EMERITUS..... Rev. Dr. Alden Welch  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT ..... Karen Shaw  
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES ..... Bonnie Pomeroy  
SEXTON ..... Eleanor Shumaker

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

*Joy to the World*

Words: Issac Watts, 1719; Music: Arr. from G.F. Handel, 1741, by Lowell Mason, 1848

*Love Has Come, Verse 1*

Words: Ken Bible, Music: Traditional French

*What Child is This*

Words: William C. Dix, 1865; Music: 16<sup>th</sup> cent. English melody

All Songs - One License A-719583

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# SPARTA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



FOURTH SUNDAY  
OF  
*Advent*

December 22, 2024  
10:30 a.m. Worship Service

71 Sparta Avenue  
Sparta, New Jersey 07871

*Open hearts, Open minds, Open doors:*  
**Not Just a Tagline: This IS who we are**